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NUMBER I

Diana's Destiny

By Charles Garvice

Author of "Just a Girl," "The Outcast of the Family," "Nance," etc.

Charles Garvice, the author of this serial, is rated as one of the foremost novelists of the day. The enormous sales of his works on this side of the water, as well as abroad, prove that his reputation is assured. It is widely acknowledged that this universal appreciation is due to the fact that Mr. Garvice's simple and refreshing narrative style, with its strong fictional strain of human interest makes unerring appeal to every reader whose taste has necessarily become satiated by the over-burdened, exaggerated diction of much of the so-called, latter-day fiction. Mr. Garvice is under contract to write exclusively for this publication.

CHAPTER I.

DIANA stood erect on the small platform on which her desk was placed and, looking down upon the eager faces upturned to her, raised her clear, sweet voice on the first notes of the evening hymn; and the children took it up with swift and glad promptitude, and, wonderful to say, sang it in tune; for Diana had taught them to sing as conscientiously as she had taught them to read and write; and they had been apt scholars, as is always the case when the teacher's labor is a labor of love.

When the last notes had died away, Diana said:

"We will now sing the first verse of 'God save the King,' children," and the girls attacked the national anthem as if they had expected the command; for this was the breakup for the Easter holidays, when, for a week, the little

schoolroom would be silent and deserted, and Diana would be left in solitude.

"Thank you, dears," she said. "And now you are going to have a week's holiday. I hope you will all be good girls; indeed, I am sure you will. Good-by—and don't forget me!" she added, under her breath.

"Good-by, teacher!" came the chorus, and the children began to tramp out; but some of the elder ones came up to the tall, slim schoolmistress, who looked very little older than themselves, shyly offering their hands.

Diana shook hands with them, saying a kindly word or two—which would be proudly carried home by the recipients—and, bending down, caught up a tiny dot of a child who had become entangled in the group, raised her in her arms and kissed her.

"Take Susie home carefully, Annie," she said to one of the girls. "Good-by!"

When the last of the children had



*She felt a strong arm round her waist, a man's hot breath on her cheeks.
"Are you hurt?" he said. "Did he hit you?"*

passed through the door into the sunlight, Diana leaned against the desk with loosely folded hands and looked round wistfully; and, as she stood thinking of her children whom she loved, all unconscious of her beauty and grace, she made a picture which would have stirred an artist to the depths.

She was tall and slim, as has been said, with the lithe grace and ease that belong, or should belong, to youth; her face was almost a perfect oval, the dark hair, ruffled on her forehead by the hand that had swept it aside in the ardor of teaching, was soft and silky; the eyes were gray, the illusive gray which at times becomes violet and well-nigh black under the shadow of the long lashes; and the mouth small, and yet as expressive as the eyes. It was a charming face, and possessed some quality beyond that of mere beauty, which instantly impressed all who looked upon it. Per-

haps it was the slight droop or curve of the mobile lips which hinted at a strain of melancholy in the girl's nature; or it might have been a touch of wistfulness, a reserve in the eyes when she was silent or lost in thought. At other times both eyes and lips could smile, as the children who eagerly watched for that smile well knew. However the effect was caused, it was there, and it lifted Diana from the ranks of the ordinary and commonplace women of the village in which she lived and taught.

Presently she awoke from her reverie, and, after tidying the schoolroom, picking up a book here and a slate there, which the children, in their haste to be gone, had not put away, she closed the outer door behind her and passed into the small garden which divided the schoolhouse from the teacher's cottage, and surrounded the latter.

Here she lingered, looking dreamily at the flowers; for Easter was early this year; the too often procrastinating spring had come along briskly, and the beds were glowing modestly with forget-me-nots and narcissi, wallflowers and tulips; all of which had been planted and tended by Diana herself.

After a time a middle-aged woman came to the door of the cottage, and, shading her eyes with her hands, looked for a moment or two in silence at the graceful figure of the girl as she bent over the flowers; then she said in a low, subdued voice:

"Tea is ready, Diana;" and Diana followed Aunt Burton into the sitting room, where she had laid the tea. The room was tiny, of course, and it was plainly furnished; but the taste which displayed itself in Diana's plain dress and white collar and cuffs, made itself obvious in her surroundings; it was the room of a lady.

"The flowers are early this year, Aunt Mary," said Diana, as she arranged some narcissi and tulips in the vases. "I don't think they have been so fine since we came here. Let me see, how many years is it?"

"Three next June," replied Mrs. Burton, in a toneless voice.

"Is it so long! Ah, yes. I got my certificate in May, didn't I? What a day that was!" She smiled and looked thoughtfully at the fire. "We thought that I should be too young, do you remember? But I wasn't. I suppose I passed because I was so eager, so anxious. It meant so much to me, didn't it?"

The elder woman nodded and looked at the beautiful face with a curious wistfulness and a hint of pity.

"Yes, Diana. It's a hard life, hard work, I mean."

Diana shrugged her shoulders slightly. "I suppose it is. Oh, yes, I am often very tired; but it is no worse than other women's work; it is better than that of most. I am my own mistress, to a great extent; and there are the long holidays; and—the children!"

Her pale, weary-looking face lit up, and she smiled to herself.

"So one may say that you are quite content, Diana?" asked her aunt.

"Oh, quite—or nearly," replied Diana. "Of course, there are many things I want; oh, ever so many. For instance, I should like a larger playground, a separate room for the tiny children; a girl's gymnasium, a laboratory——"

"Oh, the school!" broke in Mrs. Burton, with a listless impatience. "I was speaking of yourself. It's lonely here;" she looked round for an instant, but her eyes, with their intent look, came back to the girl's face. "You never see anyone but the rector or the school inspector; never go anywhere but to Lowminster——"

"And very seldom there," said Diana. "Oh, yes, it's quiet enough; and sometimes I feel just a little dull; but it might be so much worse. Do you remember"—her voice grew low and a little tremulous—"do you remember the time in that attic in London, Aunt Mary, when we had only two shillings and tenpence left?"

Mrs. Burton's face paled and her lips twitched.

"And we should have had no money for the rent if you had not received some by post? Do you know, Aunt Mary, I often wonder where that money came from so opportunely," she broke off.

Mrs. Burton rose quickly and turned away to place the kettle on the fire.

"It was money owing to me," she said, in a dry voice. "I suppose you want the table. I'd better clear it off."

"I'll help you," said Diana, promptly.

"No, no, you sit still," said the elder woman. "You sit still; you're tired."

"I hope not; for I've a great deal to do between now and by-by. I've all the children's exercises to correct."

When the table was cleared she got the books out and began work. The light faded and the rays of the early moon poured a silvery glow on her bent head and pale cheek. She rose to light the lamp, but paused at the open door and gazed out on the fairy-like scene. It was too tempting to be resisted, and Diana, flinging one of Aunt Mary's precious antimacassars over her

head, went out. A belated bird, who had been deceived by the unusually warm spring day, was singing in one of the elms, and, listening to it half unconsciously, Diana sauntered through the garden and down the road.

It was a night for dreams; and Diana was dreaming of the past which Mrs. Burton's words had recalled. As far back as she could remember, she and Aunt Mary had lived alone together. Of her parents Diana knew next to nothing. They had died, so Aunt Mary had said, when Diana was quite a child, and had left her to Mrs. Burton's care. The aunt and niece had lived the hard and grinding life of the self-respecting poor; but, though it had left its mark upon the elder woman, it had spared the child, who had fought her way through the squalid surroundings of a dreary London back street to the schoolhouse in the little village of Wedbury.

Diana, as she walked slowly down the road, scented with the blackthorn and the primrose, and thrilling with the notes of the birds, shuddered as she recalled that attic in London; and asked herself why she was not even more happy and grateful for the change that had come into her life.

"But this isn't finishing the exercise," she murmured. "I must go back. Tomorrow there will be no work to do. A whole week's holiday! I wonder whether the children will be as tired of it as I shall be!"

She stopped at the bend of the road and looked down at the reddish haze rising from the town of Lowminster that lay in a hollow five miles away. It was a garrison town, and, consequently, a gay one; with plenty of shops, a theater and a music hall; but Wedbury lay outside the line of railway, and the quiet village was rarely troubled by its bigger and noisier sister. Diana's visits to it were few and far between, for she remembered London too distinctly to be fascinated by a provincial town, and loved the lanes and the woods, the brooks and the rivers of Wedbury too well to care to leave them.

As she turned away, to return to the cottage, the moon disappeared behind

a cloud, and at the same moment she heard the sound of wheels behind her. The lane was narrow and dark, so she drew back against the hedge to let the approaching vehicle pass.

It was a dogcart with two gentlemen in it, and immediately after passing it pulled up, and she heard one of the men say:

"I can't find the matches. Sure you gave 'em to me, Grayson?"

"Dashed if I can remember," replied the other. "My head feels like a hot potato. Here, hold the reins, Mortimer, and I'll feel for the box. There you are! Confound it! You've dropped it! Do you think you can get out?"

"I can get out right enough," retorted Mortimer. "The question is, can I get *in* again? I'll tell you what it is, we've both had too much, old man!"

He alighted laughingly, and began to hunt for the match box; and Diana saw, by the light of the lamp, that he was a certain Captain Mortimer, one of the "gentry" of the locality. He was in evening dress, with a light overcoat; his face was flushed and his movements unsteady and uncertain.

He found his box at last, lit his cigar, and handed a match up to his companion; but he seemed to be really doubtful as to his ability to return to his seat, and leaned against the body of the cart with indolent indifference.

"Yes; it was a warm evening," he said, with a laugh; "but if we're a bit bad, what about Dalesford? He's drunk twice as much as we have."

"Oh, Dalesford!" exclaimed Grayson, with a short laugh. "He can *take* twice as much. But he went the pace to-night, right enough."

"He must have lost pretty heavily," remarked Mortimer.

"That wouldn't matter. He never cares whether he wins or loses."

"That's as well, seeing that he usually loses," commented Mortimer, dryly. "He's had a long and a bad bout this time. By George! it would have knocked most of us under; but Dalesford's got the stamina of a—*a* horse, and is as hard as nails."

"Come on up," said Grayson, with good-natured impatience, "or we shall have him running into us."

"Is he driving?" asked Mortimer, as he climbed with tipsy carefulness into the cart.

"No, riding!"

"Phew!" was the significant comment. "I wouldn't insure him!"

"Your money would be safe enough," said Grayson. "Hold on tight, Mortimer! Get up, old lady!"

Diana waited until they had driven off, then went slowly toward the cottage.

The man of whom they had been speaking was Lord Dalesford, the only son of the Earl of Wrayborough, one of whose family seats stood embowered amid the trees on a knoll a couple of miles from the village. The earl and his son were very seldom there, and Diana had not seen either of them; but she had heard some of the stories of the father's eccentricity and the son's wildness, which had now and again trickled through the various social strata to the simple folk of Wedbury, who regarded the Wrayborough folk and all pertaining to them with a mixture of awe and reprobation, which had a spice of pleasurable excitement in it; indeed, the district generally was proud of the questionable distinction of possessing the maddest and wildest and most charming of noblemen as their landlord and chief, and "heir-lord."

Diana forgot the incident before she had got through the remainder of her work; and gathering up the books and extinguishing the lamp, was going up to bed, whither her aunt had gone long since—when she remembered that she had left the garden gate open. Treading on tiptoe that she might not wake Mrs. Burton, she went out and closed the gate. The night was so beautiful that she lingered, resting her arms on the top rail and looking up at the clouds as they sailed across the moon. Suddenly she heard the sound of an approaching horse, and turned quickly to beat a retreat, when the rhythmical beat of the hoofs ceased abruptly, so abruptly that she stopped short and listened. For a

moment all was silent, then she heard a sound as if the horse were plunging, and a man's voice crying out with surprise and anger.

Convinced that something unusual had happened, Diana, obeying the impulse of the moment, tore open the gate and ran down the road. The moon emerged from behind a cloud, and, as she reached the bend of the road, she saw a strange, an appalling sight.

CHAPTER II.

A horse was rearing and plunging, its bridle held by a man who was striking with a heavy stick at the rider. The blows fell fast and thick, but the man on the horse sat tight, though he swayed to and fro in the saddle, and, with his hunting crop, endeavored to ward off the blows and return them. Neither man spoke, and only the sound of the sticks, as they met in the furious onslaught and defense, and the pawing of the plunging horse, broke the silence.

Diana's heart leaped in her bosom and the blood rushed fiercely through every vein. She was only a girl, but the spirit of a woman thrilled through her and nerved her; and with a cry she ran toward the combatants and fairly flung herself upon the assailant.

Startled and amazed, for he had not heard her approach, the man uttered an oath and swung round upon her. She saw his face for a moment, a moment only; saw the bludgeon, for it was more of a bludgeon than a stick, raised to strike her; then she felt, rather than saw, the rider fling himself from his horse, and between her and the impending blow. The stick fell with a heavy crash—but not upon her; there was a momentary struggle; then, all bewildered and confused, she saw the assailant dart across the road, leap the rough fence and disappear; then she felt a strong arm round her waist, a man's hot breath on her cheek.

"Are you hurt? Don't faint—if you can help it! Are you hurt? Did he hit you? Still, Jess, still!" This was to the horse, who, quieted by her master's

voice, ceased to tug at her bridle and stood still, but trembling.

"N—o, I am not hurt," said Diana. "I am—only frightened."

"Frightened!" he said, with a smile of pleasant irony. "That seems scarcely possible after your plucky conduct. If you had not come to the rescue—and it was indeed a rescue!—I don't know what would have happened. You must be a very brave woman—girl!" he added, as he looked in the light of the moon at the slight figure.

"What was it, who was it?" asked Diana, as she drew away from his arms, and, woman like, put her hand to her hair, which had been disordered by the struggle.

The young man shrugged his shoulders.

"A tramp turned into highwayman by tempting circumstances," he said, carelessly. "It's of no consequence, as far as I am concerned; he got nothing. But you! You must be very much frightened, upset, even if you are not hurt."

"I am not hurt," said Diana. "But you—he was striking at you—!"

She broke off with an exclamation of dismay; for she had raised her eyes and saw a thin streak of blood running down his face.

He met her horrified gaze with a reassuring smile, and drew his hand across his face.

"Oh, that's nothing," he said. "But for you I should have fared much worse. It was a heavy stick—" He stopped, and his face grew dark with suppressed anger; but the next moment it was overspread by the pallor of pain and weakness, and he staggered slightly and stretched out his hand to the rail of the fence beside them, as if for support.

"You *are* hurt," said Diana, very quietly. "Is it your head—?"

He drew himself upright and smiled down at her grimly, but she saw that he did not see her; that he was by sheer force of will keeping himself from fainting.

"What shall I do?" she asked of herself more than him. "If I had some wa-

ter, brandy! Will you come—do you think you can walk as far as the cottage—?"

He forced a laugh. "I could walk a dozen miles," he said, huskily. "I assure you that there is nothing the matter—"

The blood was streaming down his face now, and Diana, interrupting his obviously untruthful assertions, put her hand on his arm pleadingly.

"Please come with me; it is not far."

He shrugged his broad shoulders and walked beside her. When they got to the door she took his hand, in her anxiety, and led him into the dark room.

"One moment. I will light the lamp."

She did so. He had removed his hat and was standing, vainly trying to stanch the blood from the wound; but he was still smiling the pleasant, half-cynical smile.

"I'm giving you a great deal of trouble," he said, as he took a glass of the brandy which Aunt Mary always kept "for medicinal purposes only."

"I'm awfully ashamed of myself. If I had been quite sober—I mean quite wide awake—I should have seen the fellow come out at me; but he was upon me before I had pulled myself together. Oh, I don't think I can let you bother any more!" he broke off, as Diana brought a bowl of water and a sponge.

"You cannot go home like that," she said, glancing with a shudder at the blood. "I will call my aunt—"

He caught her arm with an expression of undisguised dismay.

"Oh, Lord, please don't disturb her!" he said. "The whole thing isn't worth making a fuss about. I've had as bad a knock as this at football, and infinitely worse out on the frontier—India. I'm all right, I assure you. I'll just sponge. Thank you!"

He bent over the bowl, but did the sponging so clumsily, sending the water down his neck and over his shirt front—not that the latter mattered, for its once immaculate breadth was irretrievably ruined—that, half impatiently, Diana took the sponge from him and continued the operation deftly.

In doing so she parted the thick, chestnut hair and disclosed an ugly wound, the result of a blow which would have knocked most men out of time.

"It's an awful wound!" she muttered, between her teeth. "I wonder it did not kill you—or stun you, at any rate."

"Got a thick head," he said. "It runs in the family. We're the biggest stupid and dunces in the county; always were. It would take a poleax, at the very least, to down me. How pleasant the cold water feels."

"I will get some fresh," said Diana, in the low voice in which they had all along spoken, lest they should wake "Aunt Mary."

While she was gone he sat up and looked around him. He was in great pain still, and still saw through a kind of mist—he had not yet seen Diana distinctly—but his narrowed eyes took in the tone of the room, its neatness and obvious refinement.

"You are still very pale," said Diana. "Drink some more brandy while I try to bind this round your head. I have been thinking, trying to remember exactly what happened."

"Yes?" he said, politely, but with no great display of interest. "What did happen? The only thing I remember was seeing the fellow at my mare's head—"

"The horse—I'd forgotten it!" exclaimed Diana.

He smiled. "Oh, Jess? She's all right, she'll stay outside nibbling the grass until I go to her. I've trained her well, and she is rather fond of me. I was half or quite asleep, I fancy. But he woke me up pretty quickly," he added, with a grim smile.

"You saw him, saw his face?" asked Diana. "You would recognize him?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "Oh, no, I saw him for a moment or two—the whole thing was crowded into just a moment or two—but I don't think I should recognize him."

"Nor I, I fear," said Diana. "One thing struck me; he did not look quite like a tramp. Pshaw! how awkward I

am! This stupid bandage *will* slip off as soon as I tie it."

"That's all right," he said, with polite indifference. "Not like a tramp? How so?"

"Well," hesitated Diana, for nothing is more difficult than an accurate description of a person seen momentarily and under such circumstances, "he was better dressed than a tramp. I think, I am not sure, that he wore a blue serge suit, with a dark, thin overcoat. It came open in the struggle. The coat collar was turned up, and I did not see his face until he turned on me—"

"Ah, yes!" he said, quickly, and with a frown. "I think I caught sight of him at that moment. I got upon him just in time."

Diana looked at him with her brows drawn.

"Y-es. If you had not—" She left the sentence unfinished. "It is a pity that you did not ride after him."

"Well, no," he said, quietly. "I could not have left you."

"But when you saw I was not hurt— But you felt faint—"

He nodded and shrugged his shoulders. "And if I hadn't, if I had been all right, I should not have gone after him. Why should I? It was, so to speak, a fair game. And he won. And I've an idea that he did not get off scot-free. My hunting crop is a heavy one, and I felt it hit something once or twice."

"But the man ought to be caught and punished," urged Diana, to whom this easy-go-lucky philosophy did not commend itself. Your true woman can forgive a thief—"poor man, he must have been starving!"—but finds it difficult to extend the same mercy to a man guilty of a murderous assault such as that which Diana had interrupted. "He was a dark man with a mustache—"

"There are one or two dark men with mustaches in the world," he said, easily. "Pray don't trouble yourself any more about him. A man who plays that kind of game always comes to grief in the end. Some night he'll be laid by the heels and meet with his deserts. Besides—well, frankly, I should hate the fuss of a prosecution and all the rest of

it. If I had caught him I should have thrashed him and let him go. It's the easiest way of settling such matters. And now"—he rose and took up his hat and hunting crop—"I have only to try and thank you—" He stopped with a significant gesture. "No, I'd better not make so utterly futile an attempt. But I can express my regret that you should have suffered so much anxiety, should have run such a risk, and been put to so much trouble, on my account. And I do that with all my heart."

He peered at her in the semi-darkness of the cheap paraffin lamp—the lamp so rich in scent, so poor in light—and Diana, blushing a little, shook her head in depreciation of her part in the affair.

"The pluckiest thing—! But I will not try to tell you what I think of you," he broke off. "Good-night—and thank you!"

He held out his hand, and it closed over her small white one with a grasp that made his assertion that his assailant had not got off quite scot-free quite credible.

Diana drew her hand away and stepped back into the shadow. At the door he paused and looked over his shoulder at her with a smile grave and grateful, then went out very quietly, with an upward glance at the window above the porch.

Diana stood until the sound of the horse had died away, then she sank into a chair and looked round the room, as if she were asking herself if the whole affair had really occurred or were only a dream.

As she sat there mentally re-enacting the dramatic incident, it occurred to Diana that it would be wise not to tell Mrs. Burton anything of the incident. She knew how terrified her aunt would be, and how for the future she would dread to let Diana out of her sight, for she was a nervous woman, full of apprehension and quick to take alarm; it would be an actual kindness to keep her in ignorance of the episode.

Diana got up and removed all traces of her very amateurish surgery, set the room straight, and at last—it seemed

ages since she had finished the exercises—went to bed. It is easy enough to do this, but it is not so easy to sleep; Diana lay awake for some time, and when she fell asleep, her slumber, usually as placid and untroubled as that of a young child, was haunted by the vision of the rearing and plunging horse, the sound of blows and an angry voice, the sight of blood which stained her hands beyond cleansing.

And in her dreams, strange to say, she saw the face of the assailant quite plainly; saw that at the corner of the thin-lipped mouth there was a scar, as of a cut, about a couple of inches long. It was only in her dreams that she discerned the face thus plainly; when she awoke in the morning, the remembrance of the man's countenance was as dim and vague as it had been on the preceding evening.

"You look pale and tired this morning, Diana," Mrs. Burton said, as Diana stood at the breakfast table, cutting bread and butter. "Did you have a bad night? I thought I heard you come down again and move about in the kitchen."

Diana bent over the loaf and colored uneasily; and she would have liked to make a clean breast of it; but she glanced at Mrs. Burton's careworn face, with its chronic expression of anxious apprehension, and replied:

"Yes; I was moving about, aunt. But I am all right this morning. I am going for a long walk; to the top of Oak Hill, if I can; and you will find that I shall return with a tremendous color and a perfectly appalling appetite."

She set off soon after breakfast and tried to forget the incident of last night; but, of course, she failed to do so. Highway robbery—or attempted murder, which was it?—are not daily occurrences in the lives of village school-mistresses—and once or twice she caught herself thinking of Lord Dalesford; for she knew that it must have been he. The opinion, founded on hearsay, that she had formed of that nobleman had not, of course, been favorable; and it was not much more so now. He

seemed to her to be a reckless, dissipated man, whose only object in life was the pursuit of pleasure of an ignoble sort, in which drinking and gambling figured conspicuously. Brave—oh, yes; he had shown plenty of courage! And good-natured; but, perhaps, it was sheer indolence and the desire to avoid trouble which had held him back from any attempt to find the footpad. And yet, easy as it was to censure and condemn Lord Dalesford, something within her pleaded for him. Not his good looks alone, though they were striking enough, but a certain easy good temper apparent in voice and manner, and that indescribable something which proclaims the Man.

She thought of him so much that her quick, maiden sensitiveness became annoyed.

"Bother Lord Dalesford!" she said, with a certain irritation. "For Heaven's sake, let me forget him!"

But though she succeeded in driving him from her thoughts, she was reminded of him again as she went down the hill into the road; for the Wrayborough carriage passed her. The earl was seated in it—a tall, aristocratic man, who looked little more than middle-aged, though his hair was white and his face lined with fine wrinkles. He leaned back in the stately barouche, with its powdered and richly liveried servants, one gloved hand, as small as a woman's, resting on one side of the carriage, the other toying with his eyeglasses. His lordship was strikingly handsome, and Diana saw where Lord Dalesford had got his good looks. As she happened to step into the road almost abreast of the carriage, his lordship quickly raised his pince-nez and scanned her. The sight of a pretty girl had always brought a smile to his face, and Diana's beauty brought one there now. It flashed in his dark eyes, which were as bright as a young man's, and

curved the delicately cut lips. With a swift elevation of the finely penciled eyebrows he raised his hat, as if with an instinctive recognition of, and tribute to, her youth and beauty. But Di-



She took the letter from the man, who lingered for a moment or two to exchange a few words.

ana, who was not prepared for the salute, let it go unacknowledged, and the carriage rolled past her, leaving a trail of dust behind it.

There was more dust the next day, for a number of carriages drove through the village and up the road to the great house.

"There is a big dinner party at the Hall, a bachelor party," Mrs. Burton remarked. "It was to have been yesterday, but Lord Dalesford met with an accident the night before; fell from his horse coming from Lowminster. He was intoxicated, they say."

Diana colored at the partly unjust inference.

"He—he may not have been. I—I mean, so bad," she said, rather stammeringly.

She lay awake that night and listened to the carriages as they drove away

from the Hall. From some of them came bursts of laughter and snatches of song; and the horses of one vehicle, a small phaeton, probably, went by at a gallop.

Unacquainted with the great world though she was, Diana could imagine the sort of dinner party it had been; and, half unconsciously, she sighed as she turned on her pillow and strove to shut out the discordant sounds. Why were men so foolish and so wicked?

By the fourth day, if she had not forgotten her adventure in the lane, she had ceased to dwell upon it. She had spent a very happy day. Finding it impossible to get on any longer without the children, she had gone to some of the cottages and carried off half a dozen of the smaller ones for a picnic in the woods. They had a delightful time, and Diana, having restored the healthily tired and supremely happy children to their complacent mothers, went slowly homeward.

Mrs. Burton met her at the door.

"How late you are, Diana," she said. She looked more anxious and nervous than usual, and Diana made haste with a soothing response.

"They were so happy! And they begged to stay 'a little longer, and a little longer, teacher!'" she said, smiling. "I'm sorry if I've kept you, Aunt Mary. Why are you so anxious, so fearful of something happening, dear?"

Mrs. Burton made a nervous gesture with her hands.

"I'm not always so," she said, wearily. "But to-night— What is that?" she broke off.

Diana, who was in the act of filling the teapot from the kettle, paused and listened.

"It is some one coming up the path," she said, easily. "Don't be frightened, Aunt Mary; it is only the postman."

She took the letter from the man, who lingered for a moment or two to exchange a few words, country fashion, with the pretty school lady, whom he, in common with all the other young men in Wedbury, "worshiped from afar."

Few letters came either to Mrs. Bur-

ton or Diana, and she looked at this one curiously; for it was addressed to her in a handwriting painfully distinct and formal; a business letter, evidently.

As Diana opened it, Mrs. Burton watched her from the doorway, and she started as Diana uttered a half-suppressed exclamation, and, looking up with surprise, said:

"How strange! I wonder what it means? 'Fielding'! I never heard the name before. Listen, aunt!"

DEAR MADAM: I have a communication of such importance to make to you that I think it would be better if I could do so personally—I mean, by word of mouth. It would give me great pleasure to come down to you, but stress of business renders it quite impossible; and I am compelled to ask you to be good enough to come up to me as early as possible; in fact, to-morrow, if you can do so. I am presuming that your aunt, Mrs. Burton, will accompany you.

I ought to say that there is nothing in the nature of my communication to alarm you; indeed, quite the contrary.

I am,

Yours very truly,

JOHN R. FIELDING.

"Fielding!"

Mrs. Burton echoed the name, her hand pressed to her heart, her face deathly pale. "Don't go! You must not go, Diana!"

Diana rose and went to her.

"But why not, Aunt Mary? Do you know him? He is a lawyer, I suppose; his address is Lincoln's Inn. Why are you trembling so? What is the matter?"

Mrs. Burton struggled to regain her composure.

"Nothing—nothing," she said, drawing a long breath. "Yes; he is a lawyer. We must go."

CHAPTER III.

To soothe her aunt, Diana made light of the letter, and treated it as quite an ordinary one; but she lay awake a greater part of the night wondering who Mr. Fielding was and what his communication could be.

They caught the early train from Lowminster, fortunately a quick one, and, reaching London, took a cab to

106 Lincoln's Inn. During the journey Mrs. Burton had scarcely spoken, and for a greater part of the time had sat with closed eyes; and as they approached the office her pale, wan face assumed an expression of dogged resolution, as if she were preparing herself for some ordeal.

A clerk in the outer office received them with solemn dignity, and went to announce their arrival to Mr. Fielding. The office was a very old-fashioned one, handsome but grimy. There were cobwebs in the beautifully molded cornice; dust lay on the furniture and the rows of books; but the clerk had moved noiselessly; an air of silence, a hint of mystery, as if the place were haunted by the shade of dead and gone secrets, brooded over the building. Diana began to grow nervous, for the first time. The inner door—there were two, one being covered with thick baize—opened, and the clerk, with a gesture and a bow, as if speech were golden and not to be wasted, ushered them in.

Mr. Fielding rose from his chair at the table, and looked from one to the other with a piercing gaze, which was masked behind a smile of welcome. There was a faint surprise as well as keenness in his sharp eyes, as if he had not expected to see so beautiful, so lady-like a girl. He was a middle-aged man with a clean-shaven face and thin, set lips, and his expression, when the smile had faded, was that of alertness, of watchfulness, as if he were on guard and standing ready to parry a thrust or deliver one. The hand he extended to the two ladies was soft but firm, and it closed over Diana's as if he were taking her into custody.

"I am delighted to see you, Miss Bourne," he said, in a low but soft voice. "And you, Mrs. Burton. You are looking extremely well," he added to the latter, "and not in the least changed since I had the pleasure of seeing you last." He uttered the conventional falsehood without a flicker of the eyelid, and waved them courteously to the chairs that had been placed for them by the clerk, so placed that the light fell directly on their faces, enabling Mr.

Fielding to watch them easily. "I hope my letter did not alarm you. A lawyer's letter, whatever its nature, is, I know, never very welcome to a lady. You are still at Wedbury; still at the school? You see, I know your whereabouts, your movements." He smiled, and nodded at them both impartially.

"Oh, yes," replied Diana, "I am still schoolmistress there; and hope to remain so."

"Ah, yes," he assented, looking above her head and beyond her, his lids half lowered. "Let me see, they give you—your salary is—?"

"Eighty pounds a year," said Diana, with modest pride. "And an extra sum for light and firing."

"An extra sum for light and firing," he repeated, quite gravely. "Just so; an extra sum for light and firing. And I take it that you are quite happy and contented?"

"Oh, quite, quite!" Diana assured him, her eyes glowing, her lips parted in a smile. "It is the dearest little school and the coziest little cottage. And the children—ah, well, I don't think that there are such dear, good children in any other part of England. I wish you could come down and see them. Perhaps you will some day? Wedbury is a very pretty place, and the scenery is famous."

"I am afraid it is very improbable that I should ever visit Wedbury; for if I went it would be to see you, Miss Bourne; and I do not think you will remain there much longer. I beg of you not to be alarmed," he added, quickly, as Diana changed color.

"I—I was afraid the inspector had been making some complaints," she said, apprehensively.

"Not at all," he said. "I happen to know that everybody concerned appreciates your work. What I meant was that it is probable you will be leaving Wedbury at once and of your own accord."

He paused for a moment, then he looked at Mrs. Burton. "Miss Bourne does not remember her father, I suppose?" he said, softly. "Ah, no, it wasn't possible."

"My father died when I was quite a baby," said Diana, in a low voice.

"Just so," he assented; "at least so, for the best reasons, you were given to understand; but it was not quite accurate. As a matter of fact, your father died only a few months ago."

As he spoke, he filled a glass with water and unobtrusively placed it on the table within reach of Mrs. Burton; but she disregarded it, and sat, with white face, staring at the wall before her. Diana uttered an exclamation half of grief, half of surprise. She scarcely realized the significance of the communication, but was conscious of a sense both of injury and bereavement. Why had she been kept in ignorance of her father's existence; why had he never come to her, sent for her? As if he read the unspoken question in her face, Mr. Fielding said, in the same low, deliberate voice:

"Your father, Miss Bourne, was a somewhat singular man; he was eccentric and erratic; a man who was so fond of—traveling that he could not remain for any length of time in one place."

While he was speaking he was watching the elder woman, and, though his eyes were not turned to her, he managed to convey a warning, to put her on her guard. It was skillfully done, and Mrs. Burton was conscious of his intention and sat rigid and stonelike.

"When your father left England some years ago—he never returned—he was a poor man. He went to America, where he met with the trials and the opportunities which poor men find so abundant there. For some time he endured the usual hardships of the man who is struggling to exist, and years elapsed before I heard from him. I was his lawyer."

He paused and glanced openly at Mrs. Burton, and with a distinct warning.

"He was then at a place in South America called Chaquetta—rather a pretty name; evidently Mexican. At that period it was quite a small place, and your father was, in the parlance of business, quite a small man; but Chaquetta grew and so did your father.

There are mines of various kinds in Chaquetta, and your father became connected with some of them. He engaged in other enterprises and made money. From time to time he forwarded me certain sums to hand to Mrs. Burton, who had charge of you——"

"I have kept an account," said Mrs. Burton, hoarsely. "I have still some left; all that was spent was spent on Diana——"

"Aunt Mary!" exclaimed Diana, remonstratingly, the tears starting to her eyes.

"My dear lady," said Mr. Fielding, quickly, "I am quite aware of that. I think I ought to tell you that I have kept myself acquainted with all the details of your and Miss Bourne's life since her father dis—left England. I am quite sure you have been an efficient and affectionate guardian."

"Oh, yes, yes!" Diana broke in. "Aunt Mary has been all the world to me; mother, father, brother, sister; all the world."

"Quite so, quite so," said Mr. Fielding, reassuringly and soothingly. "Let me see, where was I? Eighty pounds a year, I think you said, and light and firing? A nice little income; very nice. But, as I said, I think you will have to surrender it. As I told you, your father died three months ago." He tapped some papers on the table. "I have all the dates and particulars here, and will give them to you before you go, so that you may look them over quietly and by yourself. He died—suddenly, but he had, fortunately, made his will. It was a very short one, on a sheet of weather-stained paper; but I am glad to say that it is quite valid. Glad to say, because—let me read it to you."

He took up one of the papers and, with a glance at Mrs. Burton, read aloud and impressively:

"I, Benjamin Bourne, leave everything of which I am possessed to my daughter, Diana Bourne, who lives in England under the care of my sister, Mary Burton.

"(Signed) BENJAMIN BOURNE."

Diana's eyes were full of tears. "My father! Oh, why did I not know him?

Why did he keep away from me? He must have remembered me, must have been fond of me, to have left me this money."

Mrs. Burton did not speak; Mr. Fielding looked from one to the other

clutched the arms of her chair, and Mr. Fielding, as unobtrusively as before, pushed the glass of water a little nearer to her. As for Diana, her still tear-dimmed eyes opened widely and her lips parted, as if she were amazed; indeed,



Mr. Fielding rose from his chair. "I am delighted to see you, Miss Bourne," he said.

silently, as if to give Diana time to recover from her very natural emotion. Then he said:

"As Mrs. Burton is aware, your father's remittances ceased some time ago, and I feared that he had fallen into bad luck."

"I do not care—about the money," said Diana. "It is his thinking of me—"

"But there was some money," said Mr. Fielding. "You do not ask how much. I think you will be surprised when I tell you that it was a very large sum. In fact—eighty pounds a year, with light and firing, I think you said, Miss Bourne?" he broke off, with a curious smile—"in fact, when your father died he was interested in all or nearly all the flourishing concerns in this place with the queer name: mines, factories, land, house property. He died worth, as far as I can ascertain, considerably over a million of money."

Mrs. Burton drew a long breath and

she scarcely realized the significance of the lawyer's statement.

"A million of money?" she said, at last. "Do you mean that he left this money, all of it, to me?"

"That is exactly what I have been trying to break to you," responded Mr. Fielding, "and I trust I have succeeded in breaking it gently. Good news is often a greater shock than bad. And now you understand why it is not very probable that you will remain at Wedbury teaching school at eighty pounds a year and light and firing." He leaned back and smiled, and rubbed his hands together with an air of satisfaction and enjoyment.

Diana put her hand to her brow and shut her eyes. She was trying to realize this thing that had happened to her; but, for the moment, all that she could think of was that she was going to leave Wedbury, say good-by to the children she loved.

"Let me think," she said. "A million

of money. It belongs to me. Then we are rich?" She stretched out her hand and clasped her aunt's and smiled at her through a mist of tears. "Rich! Oh, Aunt Mary, the things I will buy for you!"

Mr. Fielding nodded approvingly.

"There are a few things better even than money," he said, with a smile. "And one of them is a loving and a tender heart. I congratulate you, Miss Bourne, and you, Mrs. Burton—on its possession. Oh, yes, you can buy all sorts of things; in fact, there are not many that you cannot buy. And you want to begin at once. Of course, of course! Now, here I can help you." He took some bank notes from a drawer, as if he had put them there in readiness, as he had, and held them out to Diana. "There is a little money to go on with. Of course, I will open a bank account for you. Presently you will be spending a great deal of money. You will want to buy a big house, a large estate in the country; a house in London. I know of one in Park Lane that would just suit you."

Diana had pressed the notes into her aunt's hand, and she turned to Mr. Fielding with a rather frightened air.

"A big house, an estate—a house in London?" she breathed.

He regarded her with a smile; then he glanced at Mrs. Burton. It was a questioning glance, and she answered it by a flicker of her eyelids and a twitch of her thin, pale lips.

"Ah, well; no, not at once," he said. "All that may come a little later. Just at first you will like to become accustomed to this vast fortune of yours. Now, I wonder if I might venture to advise you?"

"Yes; oh, yes," responded Diana, quickly. "We shall be very grateful, shall we not, Aunt Mary? You have been so kind, so considerate. Yes, pray help me; pray tell me what I ought to do."

"Well," he said, leaning forward and looking at her with a curious expression, as if he were on his guard, "if you are so good as to allow me to advise you, I should say: Don't launch

out just at first. In fact, if I were you, Miss Bourne, I think I would say nothing about this sudden—good fortune of yours down at Wedbury. There is no need to make this vast legacy public. The newspapers are so eager to get hold of anything sensational; they would jump at the chance of making a story of this sudden acquisition of wealth, would—er—rake up—I mean, allude to your father's long absence." He did not look at Mrs. Burton, but he saw her hand grip the chair tightly, and her lips writhe. "In fact, you would become public property, and as famous—I was going to say as notorious—as the fashionable beauty, or a popular—actress. And I am sure you would not like that kind of fame; would not care to see your portrait in the society journals with some such line as this under it: 'Miss Bourne, who inherited over a million of money from her father, whom she had not seen since childhood.'"

Diana winced and shrank back. "Oh, no, no," she said, in a low voice. "I would rather—"

"Not possess the money," he said, with a nod of approval. "Quite so. Now, I would suggest that you—and Mrs. Burton—he nodded to the elder woman reassuringly and encouragingly, as if he should say: "There is no need for alarm; all is well—take a trip abroad for a time. You can go round the world, if you like. You have almost enough money to construct a railway to the moon. Go where you like, stay as long as you like, enjoy yourself. While you are away, I will look out for a nice little house to which you can come when you are tired of globe trotting. Then you yourself shall choose a larger place, an estate suitable to so wealthy a young lady; a house in town, and the rest of it. Oh, but forgive me"—he broke off with an air of apology—"I am taking it for granted that you will wish me to remain in the position of your solicitor and adviser."

"Yes, yes," said Diana, eagerly. "Of course I do. I shall be only too grateful if you will be my friend as you were once that of my dead father and will

take care of this money, and will look after Aunt Mary and me."

Mr. Fielding smiled. "The latter will be the pleasantest part of my duty, believe me, Miss Bourne," he said, with a smile. "I have your late father's affairs in hand, and I will go into them and watch over your interests. You will stay in town for a time, of course. I should recommend—" He mentioned one of the grandest and most expensive of the London hotels.

Diana's face fell, and she looked at her aunt wistfully.

"Oh, must we?" she said, hesitatingly, and with evident reluctance. "I—I should like to go back to Wedbury at once. I may have so short a time to stay there; and I want to see as much of my children—before I leave them forever."

Mr. Fielding laughed, and for quite a minute his keen eyes softened as they dwelt upon the beautiful face of the great heiress, whose eyes were dim at the thought of leaving a parcel of school children.

"Very well, then," he said. "Go back, by all means. But you must write to me, come and see me whenever you want to do so. Please do not forget that you may have as much money as you want. Ah, yes; we will open that account. I'll go down with you to the bank at once."

He rose and rang for his hat, which the clerk brought and offered to him with the air of one performing a religious ceremony. Mr. Fielding drew on his gloves, looking under his eyelids and smiling at the two timid women.

"Come, then," he said. "The bank is not far; we will walk, shall we?"

He opened the door for them to precede him, and Diana passed out. Mrs. Burton was following her, but paused, and, going back to the room, picked up a glove which she had let fall from her nervous hands. Mr. Fielding waited for her, and she drew near to him and beckoned him to approach. Her lips moved for a second, but silently, as if the words she wanted to speak would not come; then she said, in a whisper, that was almost audible:

"You will not tell her?"

He raised his eyebrows and regarded her with faint surprise, as if he pretended that he did not understand her.

"Tell her? My dear lady, what is there to tell Miss Bourne?"

Her lips quivered and she plucked at them with a shaking hand, her eyes fixed imploringly on his.

He shook his head at her rebukingly.

"My dear Mrs. Burton, let the dead past bury its dead. Why should you and I disinter it? Not only shall I not tell this charming and beautiful girl that which you and I know, but I shall *forget it*. I have done so already. Let me advise you to do the same. We shall only be following the example of the world. Everything is forgotten. Tell her! It would be worse than cruel, it would be foolish. We lawyers are obliged to be cruel, but, believe me, we are never fools—if we can help it. You have found your glove, Mrs. Burton? Right! then come along. Sorry to keep you waiting, my dear Miss Bourne. Your aunt dropped her glove. What lovely weather! The sun is shining on you, my dear young lady! May it long continue to shine."

CHAPTER IV.

Dalesford rode home quite quietly—for him; and much to the surprise of Jess, who was accustomed to going hard when her master was on her back, especially at night.

A groom came across the stable yard to take the horse, and Dalesford signed to him to lead the mare under the lamp, and passed his hands over her carefully. There was a bruise on her shoulder, and Dalesford pointed to it, and bade the groom bathe it.

"A fall, my lord?" asked the man, looking up at his lordship's stained forehead—the bandage had long ago been transferred to Dalesford's pocket—where a spot or two of blood was showing.

Gurdon, his man, was waiting for him, and, as he took his master's hat, at once saw the wound. But he was too

well trained to make any remark or to ask any questions, and, having valeted Dalesford, respectfully bade his lordship "Good-night." Dalesford responded courteously but absently, and as the man reached the door called him back.

"I met with an accident this evening, Gurdon," he said. "Call me a little later, will you? And, Gurdon, there is no need to mention it, please."

"Certainly, my lord," responded Gurdon, with a slight air of surprise, as if the injunction was quite unnecessary.

After he had gone, Dalesford lit a cigar, sank into an easy-chair and smoked and thought hard.

"I suppose that fellow would have settled me if she had not come up," he said to himself. "A plucky girl. He very nearly struck her, the hound!—and beautiful, too, I think—I wish I could have seen her face distinctly—a musical voice—a lady, evidently. What's she doing in that cottage? Ah, yes, the school cottage. That is it, of course. She is the schoolmistress. I should like to see her again. I wonder what her name is."

He took the handkerchief from his pocket and examined it. There was the faint trace of some initials, which had been partly erased by the demon-washerwoman.

"I'll ask—I must call——"

His pale face colored and he frowned; for it had suddenly occurred to him that to meditate a flirtation with this girl, who had in all probability saved his life, was a mean way of requiting her heroism. The kindest thing he could do would be to refrain from intruding upon her; the world does not approve of friendship between the heirs to earldoms and young and beautiful schoolmistresses.

It was an unusually virtuous resolution for Dalesford, and he registered it with a certain amount of reluctance, for Diana's face and voice haunted him pleasantly and invitingly. He went to bed at last and slept the sleep which comes so readily to him of the sound constitution; but when he was awakened

in the morning by Gurdon, he was annoyed to find that his face was disfigured by a bruise across the temple, and that the edges of the wound had swollen.

Gurdon respectfully suggested the doctor; but Dalesford laughed.

"Nonsense! You used to be rather good at black eyes and cuts, Gurdon; surely you can cope with this."

"Yes, my lord; but that was—your lordship wasn't—was younger then," he said, as he did his best with warm water and court-plaster. "The earl's compliments, my lord, and will your lordship breakfast with him?"

Dalesford nodded. "All right. Half an hour."

In half an hour he sauntered down the corridor, and was admitted by a footman to the earl's own rooms, a luxurious suite, which overlooked the terrace, lawns and park. The earl was leaning back in a chair at the breakfast table, his thin, upright figure wrapped in a dressing gown of rose-du-barri satin, his white hand turning over his letters.

He raised his brilliant eyes—they shone like onyx—as his son entered, and, as his eyes rested on the bruised forehead, the delicately dark brows went up slightly; but he said with his ordinary expression of bland serenity, and with a cheerful nod:

"Good-morning, Vane! Good of you to take compassion on my solitude. Fine morning, isn't it? Have you seen the paper? Red Pepper is scratched. Did you back her? Ah, yes; so did I. Fish, Benson? Thanks. Don't wait."

When Benson and the footman had gone, the earl, without raising his eyes, said in a smooth voice:

"Late last night, Vane?"

"Yes, rather, sir," replied Vane. "Had a—fall." He knew that he would have to volunteer an explanation, that his father was far too courtly to ask for one.

"Not a bad one, I trust?" said the earl, sympathetically, feeling free now to raise his eyes and look, but not too keenly or curiously, at the bruised forehead.

"Oh, no; mere nothing," said Dalesford, casually.

"No? I am glad. All the same, I think we will postpone the dinner party until to-morrow. May I look at my letters? You have yours, I see."

Vane nodded and took up one or two; they were mostly bills and reminders, more or less gentle, that they were overdue.

"Same as mine, I suppose," said the earl, with a smile and shrug of his shoulders. "They should pass a short act making it a criminal offense to send in an account more than twice in twelve months. But Parliament never does anything that is really useful. By the way, talking of bills—most unpleasant and incongruous subject for so charming a morning!—Starkey wants to see you; very badly, I think, judging by his manner."

Mr. Starkey was the earl's steward and business man, the unfortunate gentleman who spent his days in an attempt to manage the family affairs.

"Does he?" responded Dalesford, with languid surprise. "Why on earth should he?"

The earl laughed softly. "I imagine that it is because he has long since discovered that it is of no earthly use his seeing me. Frankly, Starkey—bore me. I feel for him, I sympathize with him. I would not be in his place for— for double the salary he—doesn't get; as I told him the other day. The fact is, Starkey has the unpleasant knack of making me feel uncomfortable. He reminds me of Edgar Poe's raven that was always croaking 'Nevermore.' You remember? Charming poem. You don't read poetry, I think, Vance?"

Dalesford shook his head.

"Not very often, sir. But what is the matter with Starkey?" he asked, as he went to the sideboard and surveyed the breakfast dainties with an indifferent air.

The earl shrugged his shoulders slightly. "The same old story. Want of money, pressing claims, bills overdue—oh, yes, the same old story. I told him yesterday that I always know so well what he is going to say that I

could say it for him. And, by George! I think he could as easily voice my responses. Might I trouble you to bring me the caviare? Thanks! So it was not a bad fall last night? Vane, I should take it as a favor if you would get rid of that mare, or ride another one."

"It wasn't the mare's fault, sir," said Dalesford. "I—wasn't keeping a sharp lookout; the night was dark—"

"Quite so," stepped in the earl, blandly, but with a certain gravity behind his smiling eyes and serene tones. "But some darker night she will throw you and you may not come off so easily. Pardon! I know how excellent a seat you have. I mean, you may come to utter grief. I dislike playing the part of Cassandra—that is reserved for poor Starkey!—but I should like to remind you that you are the only son I possess, and that I am looking forward to your following me; though a worse one to follow, you could not find! Candidly, my dear Vane, I should not like to think that I was going to be succeeded by that unmitigated blackleg, your cousin, Desmond March. And, if anything should happen to you—which Heaven forefend!—he must so succeed."

Dalesford nodded reassuringly. "Nothing is going to happen to me, sir," he said. "I'm as hard as nails."

"I'm delighted to hear you say so. But permit me to remind you that the hardest nails are sometimes broken."

"When did you hear from Desmond March last?" asked Dalesford.

"I—really forget. He wrote to Starkey—again poor Starkey!—some little time ago, saying that he had—'got on to a good thing' was, I think, his phrase, and that he only wanted a thousand pounds to make his fortune. Starkey, I believe, wrote and told him that we, the family generally, also needed a thousand pounds, and wanted them very badly. I don't know whether that settled the matter or whether it did not. Did not, I should imagine, from my past experiences of Desmond March's pertinacity."

"He's a bad lot, I'm afraid," remarked Dalesford, absently.

"He is a very bad lot, indeed," assented the earl, with cheerful confidence. "Now, if *he* would take to riding a mare of uncertain temper——"

Benson came to the door. "Mr. Starkey, my lord."

"My good Benson, did you not tell him that I had not yet come down?" the earl asked, with gentle reproach.

"Yes, my lord; but one of the men had told him——"

The earl groaned. "Ah, well! Shall we have him up, Vane? Come to think of it, it is a capital opportunity——"

"Just as you like, sir; oh, yes; certainly."

The earl nodded to the faithful Benson, and Mr. Starkey was admitted. He was a middle-aged man, whose hair had been prematurely whitened and his face lined by the cares of state, the intermittent struggle to make both ends of the Wrayborough finances meet, and who had never yet been able to witness that meeting.

"Mr. Starkey!" said the earl, in accents of pleasant surprise. "How good of you to come round. Pray join us! Benson, a chair for Mr. Starkey! I'm afraid the coffee is cold; you shall have some freshly made."

"Thank you, my lord," said the steward, in a grave, almost somber, voice. "I have already breakfasted—hours ago."

"Really! How—how commendable. My dear Mr. Starkey, I have not the least doubt in the world that you owe your excellent health to your admirable habit of early rising. Now I—and I fear Dalesford here—have acquired a rooted objection to facing the day until it has been properly—aired. Yes, yes, pray smoke, my dear Vane!" he added, as Dalesford drew out his cigar-case and glanced at his father for permission. Mr. Starkey declined the proffered cigarette.

"I never smoke until the evening," he said, solemnly. "I find that I keep my brain clearer."

"Ah, yes!" assented the earl. "But where you have no brains—Vane, I assure you, I was speaking of myself only!

And now you want to talk, Mr. Starkey, I know! I'll leave you two——"

He rose with the alacrity of a young man, and prepared to make his escape; but Vane gently caught the rose-dubbarri dressing gown.

"No, you don't, sir!" he said, laughingly. "I wouldn't be left alone with Starkey for—*for* any money."

The earl shook his head reproachfully and sank back into his chair; and the unfortunate steward, leaning forward in his, looked from one to the other with an expression of despair, and an impatient resignation produced by a long and painful experience.

"I did want to have some talk with you, my lord; and I am very glad that Lord Dalesford is present. It is difficult to find you together——"

The earl nodded. "Dalesford is too clever for you," he said, with self-depreciation. "You can always run me to earth; but it's not so easy to catch him. Well, you've got us both this morning; and I hope you won't spare him. Just talk to him as you talk to me; I should enjoy it above all things! That's a Turkish you are smoking, Vane? Thank you!"

He leaned back with half-closed eyes and a smile of anticipatory amusement on his handsome face, which goaded Mr. Starkey into abruptness.

"I think Lord Dalesford ought to know our position—exactly how we stand, my lord."

The earl nodded complete approval.

"Certainly! Ah, yes; let him have the figures, Mr. Starkey," as the steward took some papers from his pocket. "Perhaps he will understand them; I never do! Do they teach arithmetic at the public school now, Vane? I am sure they didn't in my time. But I beg your pardon, Mr. Starkey!"

"Things are very serious, Lord Dalesford," said Mr. Starkey, addressing the son with intense gravity and earnestness. "The affairs of the estate were in a bad way when I came into the office. My father did his best."

"A most admirable man!" murmured the earl.

"Did his best; but the tide had begun to set and he could not stem it, though he tried hard to do so. I have been trying as hard all my life, and I have failed, as he did, and with a stronger

"Which, my lord?" he asked, laconically. "Wrayborough has its mortgage; Glenaskel and all the Scotch property is held in lieu by the insurance company; the Lancashire mines are dipped as



The earl raised his brilliant eyes—they shone like onyx—as his son entered.

excuse, my lord; for the debts have been accumulating. Such incumbrances as ours are like a huge snowball that grows bigger and bigger the longer it rolls."

"Clever simile!" murmured the earl. "So apt and true."

"At one time we were able, with more or less difficulty, to raise money to pay the various interests as they fell due; but lately the difficulty has been much greater, and I find it almost impossible to provide the large sum necessary to meet the accruing charges on the mortgages."

"Then why not sell some of the property?" asked the earl, as if he were making a suggestion as novel as it was brilliant. Mr. Starkey glanced at him with mild despair.

deep as I dare. The London property is covered by the Aaron loan——"

"The château at Avranches?" suggested the earl.

"Sold four years ago. Surely your lordship remembers! It was to pay the stud accounts."

"Yes, yes! Pardon! Of course! Stupid of me! But my memory is one of my weakest points, as you know."

"Then the revenue—I mean the revenue from the land, the estate generally—has been decreasing rapidly for years past. It has always been difficult to get the rent, for the tenants"—he groaned—"have been, and are, under the impression that they need not pay until they choose, and cannot understand any pressure——"

"No, no; there must be no pressure, Mr. Starkey!" said the earl. "Bless my soul, they wouldn't understand it! It would be cruel—cruel to us as well as to them. Why, my dear fellow, I should never be able to face them, never be able to ride over the place. Tut, tut! The mere idea of pressure calls up the distressing picture of the Ejected Tenant: smoking roof, family and furniture out in the road; women and children crying, and the men waving their

hands and cursing the landlord. No; no!"

"Exactly!" exclaimed Mr. Starkey, with mild exasperation. "My hands are tied——"

"My dear fellow, all our hands are tied!" retorted the earl, cheerfully. "We live in democratic times—surely you're not going, Vane."

"I was, sir," said Dalesford, with a smile. "I don't understand politics, and I want to see how the mare is. Look here, Mr. Starkey; I quite understand that we're in a bad way; and I'm sorry, as much for your sake as ours. But we've always been in a bad way, haven't we, sir?"

"Certainly, always," said the earl, with prompt acquiescence.

"And Mr. Starkey has always pulled us through, and always will, I'm sure. You see, you understand the whole thing, know the ropes so well. Take my advice, sir, and leave it all to Mr. Starkey."

"Very good advice. I will!" responded the earl.

With a nod to Mr. Starkey, Lord Dalesford left the room. The earl looked after him and sighed and smiled; he was fond, very fond, and proud, very proud, of his handsome, stalwart son.

Mr. Starkey rose and put the papers back in his pocket; and he also sighed; for he, too, was attached to the heir of Wrayborough, and would have liked to have saved him from the impending ruin. He stood lost in gloomy thought, and the earl, sympathizing with him, said at last: "Things *are* bad, I suppose, Mr. Starkey. Is there anything you can suggest?"

The steward raised his heavy eyes, then dropped them again, under the gaze of the earl's brilliant ones.

"You have, I see! Pray speak out!"

"There is one way out of our difficulties, my lord," said Mr. Starkey, in a low voice. "I—I feel a certain delicacy; I hesitate——"

"But why, my dear sir? I am quite sure you would suggest nothing that would be painful or derogatory to our position; I mean yours as well as ours, of course."

"It rests with Lord Dalesford," said Mr. Starkey, still hesitatingly.

"Yes? I am much relieved to find that it doesn't rest with *me*. What is it? What is it you want him to do?"

"To marry, my lord," said Mr. Starkey, desperately.

The earl raised his brows and laughed.

"My dear sir, I wish to Heaven he would!"

"And—and marry money," said Mr. Starkey.

The earl made a grimace.

"You—you put it somewhat bluntly," he said, ruefully. "But"—after a pause—"you are right. Yes, you are right. It is an unpleasant way out of the difficulty; but if there is no alternative, why—poor Vane must do it. But who is to tell him so?"

Mr. Starkey frowned. "If I may suggest, your lordship would be the proper person——"

The earl smiled grimly. "I may be the proper person—but I'm hanged if I do it. Now you, my dear sir, you who know how extremely necessary the step is——"

Mr. Starkey gripped his thin, long hands behind him and set his teeth.

"Something must be done!" he said, almost defiantly. "And I see no other way of saving the estate from ruin. It is—forgive me if I speak plainly, my lord——"

"My dear fellow, you always speak plainly," murmured the earl, with a stifled groan.

"It is time Lord Dalesford married. I cannot forget that if anything happened to him——"

"My dear Mr. Starkey, don't, for Heaven's sake—*don't* make matters worse by croaking!" implored the earl.

"That the title and estate—what there is left of it!—would pass to Mr. Desmond March," went on Mr. Starkey. "The mere thought of such a—a calamity——"

"Then for Heaven's sake don't let us think of it!" broke in the earl.

"And speaking of Mr. March, my lord, reminds me that he has written to

me again. It is a—well, threatening letter this time. He threatens that, if we do not send him the money he asks for, he will—well, come to the Hall for it and demand it in person."

The earl shuddered visibly. "My dear Mr. Starkey, such a—a visitation must be warded off at any cost. Send him five hundred pounds and—and tell him to go to the devil!"

"He has gone there long since, my lord," remarked Mr. Starkey, grimly. "Five hundred pounds! I'm sure I don't know where I'm to find——"

"Try him with two hundred and fifty," said the earl, persuasively.

"And—and Lord Dalesford; the plan I suggested?"

The earl rose and sighed.

"Pon my word, my dear sir, I couldn't tell him he must marry for money. You must. Not that it matters which of us undertakes the task. He wouldn't do it. He would laugh at either and both of us."

Mr. Starkey went to the door, but was arrested by a cough and a murmur from the earl.

"Oh, Mr. Starkey, I shall want a few hundreds by the end of the week."

The unfortunate steward opened his lips, shut them again; then, with something between a sigh and a groan, said:

"Very well, my lord."

As he passed out a footman came up with a letter on a salver.

"For you, sir."

Mr. Starkey opened the letter, read it absently for a minute; then he stifled an exclamation, and nervously wiped the beads of perspiration which had started to his brow. Of course, it was a demand for money. He turned, as if with the intention of re-entering the earl's room; but hesitated, and, at last, with a gesture of despair, walked slowly and heavily down the great staircase, with Black Care close behind him.

CHAPTER V.

"Mr. Fielding, I wonder whether you would mind very much if I called you my Fairy Godmother?" said Diana.

Mr. Fielding leaned back in his cane rocking-chair and smiled. He had had an excellent dinner prepared by a cook of his own choosing, and was enjoying a mild, a very mild, cigar, through the smoke of which he was regarding, with intent appreciation, the beautiful girl reclining in the chair beside him.

They were seated on the terrace under a broad veranda, which ran the length of what the house agent had called "the most *recherché* residence in Berkshire." Before them lay a lawn like green plush, broken here and there by beds of flowers, which rivaled the hues of the peacock that strutted about in the red glow of the sunlight. Beyond the lawn ran that most wonderful of all rivers, the placid, silver Thames, its deep blue broken by white spots—the swans that floated near the landing stage. A pine wood rose behind the house and filled the air with the delicious and health-giving odor of terebene. Noisy London might have been a hundred miles away, for the only sounds that broke the stillness were the cry of the peacock, the rustle of the swans' wings, and the notes of the nightingale, who was just tuning up for his nightly concert.

"You shall call me what you like, Miss Diana," responded Mr. Fielding, with the affability he always displayed in Diana's presence.

"Thanks very much!" said Diana, laughingly. "And, really, the old lady in the red cloak and high poke hat, who appeared to poor Cinderella and did the conjuring tricks with the melon and the mice, did not better deserve the title than you. Why, yes; I was just Cinderella. And you came and waved your wand and—and here I am! 'With my pockets full of money,' with everything the heart of man—I mean woman—could wish for! It is marvelous, and you are the most effective Fairy Godmother that ever lived."

"You enjoyed yourself abroad, my dear?" he asked.

"Oh, yes; yes! I had sometimes dreamed of seeing all these wonderful things, but I never thought my dream would be realized. 'Enjoyed myself.'"

Yes, indeed! The days passed like a vision. I used to start awake at night and ask myself if it could be true that I, Diana Bourne, was traveling on the Continent like a princess incognito. It was so hard to realize that I could go where I liked, stay there as long as I liked, or move when I liked. That I was rich enough to put up at the palatial hotels, travel first-class—do you know, Fairy Godmother, that that little matter of first-class instead of third helped me more than anything else to realize the—the change that your wand had wrought for your Cinderella? Only the rich ride first-class, you know—and then to feel that I could buy anything I wanted— Ah, you can't understand the delicious thrill that used to run through me as I gazed into a shop window and coveted some of the things in it, and then suddenly remembered that I could walk in and buy them without counting the cost!"

"And you bought a great many things?" he said, with a man-of-the-world's enjoyment of the naive confession made by the beautiful lips half parted with the smile of happiness.

"Oh, dear, yes! All the things I didn't want. That's it, you know. To be able to buy the things you don't want! Whenever I saw anything that I thought Aunt Mary would like, oh, the joy of stalking in and saying: 'I'll have that, please!' Poor aunt was frightened at first, and reproached me for extravagance; and I don't think she is quite resigned even yet."

"You traveled a great deal?"

"Oh, yes! However beautiful the place was, there always seemed to be a still more beautiful one a little further on. Yes, we covered no end of ground. France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy—it would fill a geography. And everywhere we were made much of and treated as if we were, indeed, princesses. It was the money, of course——"

"Not altogether the money," he murmured, smilingly, as he looked at the beautiful face, the graceful figure clad in its costly dress of black lace, upon which sparkled the few diamonds Aunt Mary had persuaded Diana to buy.

"And, at first, it seemed as if I could go on, and on, and on until I had gone right round the world; but presently"—she paused, and her eyes grew dark and dreamy—"but presently I—well, I was homesick, I wanted to see the white cliffs of old England, to hear the dear old Cockney twang, the broad, country drawl; to see the green fields—there are no green fields like those of England!—to hear the railway porters shrieking the stations by names quite unlike their proper ones; to breathe the London smoke and hear the cows lowing as they turned home at milking time. You see, I mixed it all up together—town and country. I wanted them both. I wanted Great Britain, England, Scotland and Ireland! All of it!"

She drew a long breath and looked wistfully, lovingly, at the beautiful scene before her.

"I wanted—home! And then, when I felt as if I should die if I didn't get there, you—you Fairy Godmother—found me this beautiful house—why, it's a veritable fairy one! I could have cried aloud when you brought me here and showed me this pretty place, with its gables and its broad eaves, its dainty rooms and its lovely gardens!"

Mr. Fielding smiled with self-satisfaction. "I had an idea that it was just the place you'd like, my dear."

"It's a dream!" said Diana, rapturously. "To-morrow I'm going to spend the whole day going over it; I haven't seen half of it yet! Janet, my maid—that's another thing I'm not quite used to yet; a maid who insists upon helping me dress, and won't let me do my own hair or mend a thing! Janet tells me that there are cows; actually cows! And a dairv! Do you think I shall be allowed to make the butter, Fairy Godmother?"

"I'm afraid not!" he replied, laughingly.

Diana pretended to pout. "That's just the one drawback of being disgustingly rich. I find you can't quite do as you like. And the horses! There are the big carriage horses; there's the dearest mite of a pony; I felt inclined to pick

it up and kiss it! And I'm going to learn to ride. Yes! Years ago"—her voice grew softer, more dreamy—"I remember watching the ladies riding in the park. I was a tiny child, rather shabby; oh, very shabby, and—and sometimes rather, oh, very hungry. And I used to watch them—not enviously, for that would have been absurd; but as if they were denizens of another world: as if they had come out of Heaven just—just for a ride, and were going back there. And now I am one of them!"

She was silent a moment.

"If—if I should ride in the park, and saw a shabby little girl looking at me, I should think of that other one, myself, years ago; and I—well, I should want to lift her onto the saddle beside me."

Mr. Fielding nodded, and he looked at her thoughtfully. He was not easily moved to sentiment, but very often he was touched by some such speech of Diana's.

"It's the quaintest, the prettiest village here," she went on. "The children were coming out of school as we drove through. And the people looked so nice and prosperous—and touched their hats and courtesied. Do you think—I wonder whether they would let me visit the school, and go and see some of the people? Do you think they'd mind?"

Mr. Fielding laughed. "My dear young lady, they'd be delighted, I'm sure. But"—with sudden caution—"you must be careful! They're certain to be always having measles or whooping cough, or something; they always do in healthy villages."

Diana laughed. "Oh, I'm afraid of I. D.'s," she said.

"I. D.'s?"

"Inspectors' abbreviation for Infectious Diseases," explained Diana, glibly. "They're dreadful things; they close the school." She was silent for a moment or two, her thoughts wandering back to her own school, her own children there at Wedbury; and she recalled the pain of parting with them.

"Oh, I must, I *must* go and see the school! I'll have the children up here,

on the lawn. And give them buns and milk. Nothing in the world is half so good as a bun, a real, indigestible bun, you know."

Mr. Fielding smiled again. "Oh, yes; I can see that you will slip into the part of Lady Bountiful, my dear, and that this pretty place will be soon overrun by noisy children—and snuffy old women."

Diana nodded defiantly and laughed softly. At this moment one of the French windows behind them opened, and Mrs. Burton came out in her quiet way.

"Are you sitting here without a shawl, Diana? You will catch cold," she said, in her low, nervous voice.

"Shawl me no shawls, Aunt Mary!" exclaimed Diana, gayly. "It's quite warm—it's Italy in England! Come and sit down and talk with Fairy Godmother!"

She put her white hand—there was now the glitter of diamonds instead of ink stains on the beautiful fingers—to draw her aunt down; but Mrs. Burton shook her head.

"No; I have a great deal to do," she said, and, after a nervous glance at the lawyer, she re-entered the house.

"And Mrs. Burton? She enjoyed her long trip?" he asked.

"I—I hope so. No; I'm afraid she didn't. Poor Aunt Mary! I think she was homesick the day we left England! The months must have seemed very long to her. I was selfish to stay—but she would not hear of coming back till I, too, longed for home. Poor Aunt Mary!" Her brows came together thoughtfully, wistfully. "I wonder why she is so—so nervous, so full of nameless fears and forebodings? I had hoped that the change—I mean all this tremendous sum of money, and the change of scene—would have dispelled her nervousness; but it has not. Do you know what is the cause of it, Mr. Fielding?"

Mr. Fielding coughed and looked straight before him.

"Your aunt is too old to be affected by the change," he said, rather coldly. "I mean, that her early life, the strug-

gles and privations—— My dear young lady, you can look back at the little girl who watched the horses in the park and smile. Fortune came to you before it was too late—strange to say! You can forget—well, no, not forget, but look back without bitterness; you are young. But your aunt——”

Diana looked at him wistfully, as if she were not quite satisfied with his explanation.

“Aunt Mary is not bitter,” she said. “No; it is not that. It is as if—it is so hard to describe—as if she were always dreading lest something should happen; as if she were waiting for some trouble——”

“Hush!” he whispered, warningly, as Mrs. Burton came out again and put a shawl over Diana’s shoulders.

“Your dress is thin,” she said, “and the evening is growing chilly.”

She was gone again, almost before Diana could thank her.

Mr. Fielding looked after the elder woman with a frown.

“Mrs. Burton will be—better, now that she is back in England,” he said.

“How late the light holds!” remarked Diana, presently. “Look, they are only just beginning to light up in that house on the other side of the river. How big it looks, though one can only see a bit of it above the trees. Who lives there, do you know?”

Mr. Fielding shook his head.

“I haven’t the least idea. But you will soon know; for the people will be calling on you before long.”

Diana laughed. “Do you think so? I hope the natives will be friendly. But perhaps”——rather hopefully——“they won’t call.”

“They may or they may not,” he said. “Of course, if they knew that you were——well, a millionairess——”

Diana made a little deprecatory gesture.

“Don’t! I’ve taken a dislike to the word. I don’t want to be sought after for—my money.”

“I know, my dear young lady, I know,” he said, soothingly. “That’s why I bought this small place—though it’s a pretty expensive one for its size—

instead of buying an estate with a mansion suitable for a person of your wealth. I might have purchased one of the historic houses——”

“I’m glad you did not, Fairy Godmother,” Diana cut in. “I’m not ashamed of my riches, but—but—I don’t want to flaunt them. During our travels I met some people who were all diamonds and gold dust—you know what I mean?—and I don’t want to seem like them. No; this beautiful, this fairy house, with its quaint gables and unexpected turnings—do you know, I lost my way in one of the passages; corridors, I suppose I ought to call them?—is more than sufficient for me.”

Mr. Fielding regarded her contemptively.

“You are a strange girl,” he said.

“Most young women would have been only too delighted to reign in a big place, to make aristocratic friends and—and seize upon the advantages which such wealth as yours gives.”

“Yes; but consider!” said Diana, leaning forward in her chair and regarding him dreamily. “Only a few months ago I was—well, just a school-mistress at Wedbury, with eighty pounds a year, and lights and firing.” She mimicked his voice, and he laughed. “Then you came with the wonderful story of this inherited wealth, and I blossomed into a—hateful word!—millionairess. At first it seemed as if I had inherited the whole, wide world. Then, presently, I realized that money cannot buy everything; that, though nearly every one bows down to it, it is, after all, powerless to wave the magic wand which lifts us to happiness; and—— Ah, well; I’m glad you didn’t buy an historic mansion and compel me to play the great lady. Here, at Rivermead, I can be ‘a simple, single lady, living at her ease.’ You are sure you have not told anyone that I am—I am disgustingly rich?”

“Quite sure,” replied Mr. Fielding, with a smile. “You can—well, conceal your golden hoof as long as you please.” He stifled a yawn. “There is something in this air that makes me sleepy. And I have some letters to

write before I turn in to-night. I think I'll go to the study."

Diana laughed. "Is that what you call the dear little room on the left of the hall; the room with the bookshelves? All right. I'll tell them to send you in some—is it whisky and soda?"

"Whisky and soda it is, Miss Diana," he responded. "The drink that gives an edge to giddy youth and a support to venerable old age."

When he had gone, Diana leaned back in her exquisitely comfortable deck-chair, and looked before her with half-closed eyes. Not yet had she realized the change that had come into her life, and often, in her sleep, she awoke fully convinced that she was the schoolmistress of Wedbury, and oppressed by the fear that she had overslept herself and was late.

She lay in a reverie for some time; then, aroused by the striking of the church clock—she meant to "do" that ancient church thoroughly—she drew her shawl round her and, liberating herself from the embraces of the too comfortable chair, strolled slowly to the landing stage.

The moon was nearly at its full, and the river—well, even "the minor poet" could not have done justice to it to-night. The water shone with the keenness of a Damascus blade. The shadow of every withy stood out like the tree itself, the murmur of the weir sang a mystic and soul-soothing song.

Diana stood on the landing stage looking out over the river, her spirit in perfect harmony with the scene; and it came like a shock to be suddenly awakened to the prosaic, by hearing a girl's voice chanting:

"If I love you, and you love me,
And we love each other, then—
How happy we shall be. For I love you
And you love me—"

She looked in the direction of the musical voice, and saw a punt coming downstream. A man was punting; a young girl—Diana could see her long brown hair streaming down her back—was half sitting, half lying in the stern. She was dressed in white, with a shawl

drawn across her girlish bosom, and on her lap was a fat pug.

The man was tall and partly in evening dress; that is to say, he had taken off his coat and waistcoat, and had tied a handkerchief round his waist so that he might punt with ease.

It was a pretty picture; and Diana regarded it admiringly and wistfully because the young girl seemed so happy. And, for all her wealth, Diana had not, as yet, tasted perfect happiness; she knew that there was still something lacking in her life.

Loath to break their solitude—there was no sound other than that of the girl's voice—she drew back into the shadows; and with a strange sense of loneliness, watched them.

The punt came swiftly down the stream, so swiftly that the nose of it nearly touched the landing place. The pug leaped to the end of the punt, sprang ashore, and ran, sniffing and panting, toward Diana.

"Oh, Vane!" cried the girl in the punt. "Tubby has gone ashore! You must go after her! Aunt Selina would never forgive me if I lost her."

The man shrugged his shoulders and sent the punt to the landing stage. Then he dropped the pole and stepped out.

By this time Diana had conquered her nervousness, and, with the pug jumping up and yapping at her, confronted the man.

"I beg your pardon—the dog," he said, apologetically. "Ah, here she is. I am very sorry—"

He stopped short and looked fixedly at Diana. It was not only the beauty of the face upon which the moon was shining, but the vague sense of having seen it before that arrested his words.

If he had not quite forgotten the young schoolmistress, who had rendered him such signal service on a certain night, his memory of her was dim and uncertain.

But Diana had recognized him, and waited—wondering. He frowned for a moment in a puzzled fashion, then took up the burden of his apology.

"The little beast jumped off the punt

—I drove it too near your landing stage. Pray forgive it—and me—for trespassing.”

He packed the dog under his arm, raised his straw hat and strode back to the punt. Diana had not spoken. For some reason, which she could not have explained, she was glad that he had not recognized her. She had no wish to renew her acquaintance with “the wild Lord Dalesford.”

“Have you got it?” the young girl in the punt called out. “Oh, Vane, how tiresome! Give her to me!”

She held out her arms, forgetting that, in doing so, she was releasing the punt which she had been holding to the landing place; of course, it swung downstream. She staggered slightly, nearly lost her balance, and quite dropped the pug into the water.

“Vane!” she cried, with a girlish shriek. “I’ve let it fall overboard.”

“So I hear!” said Dalesford, coolly; he knelt down and snatched the dog from the water, holding it up dripping, and gasping indignantly.

“Oh, look at it! It’s wet through! Whatever shall I do! Aunt Selina will have a fit if I take it home like this; a series of fits. Look at its eyes! They’re bulging dreadfully!”

“It’s all right,” said Dalesford. “The little beast will be dry by the time we get home. Don’t worry, Mab.”

“Oh, no, it won’t!” she responded, tragically. “It takes ever so long to dry; and Aunt Selina will be fearfully angry. She won’t let me come out with you again, Vane!”

There was a touch of pathos in the girl’s voice which made Dalesford lay the pole down and take the pug from her.

“I’ll dry him on my coat,” he said. “No, I can’t; I left it on the bank. Confound Tubby!”

Diana had been watching the comedy from a coign of vantage in the shadow.

“Perhaps you can dry it with this,” she said, offering her shawl.

The girl in the punt sprang ashore, exclaiming, gratefully:

“Oh, how kind of you! But, really,

we ought not to— Must I?” as Diana gently pressed the shawl into her hand. “Vane, give her to me! Oh, you troublesome little wretch! There, there!”

The shivering pug stared at her resentfully, and squirmed under the process as the girl rubbed it dry.

“So very, very kind of you! It’s my aunt’s dog, and she makes no end of a fuss over it. My Aunt Selina, you know— But perhaps you don’t know? Lady Selina Lashwood. She—we—she and I—Vane, what are you grinning at?”

“You seem to be getting a little mixed, Mab; that’s all,” he said.

“No, I’m not; not a bit,” retorted the girl, indignantly. “Shè and I live up at the house there. And Vane, my cousin—I mean, Lord Dalesford—is staying with us.”

Dalesford raised his hat. “Please let me continue the introduction,” he said, with a smile. “This young lady who dipped Tubby is my cousin, Lady Mabel Dashford. She would bring the obnoxious little brute—”

“No, I didn’t!” retorted Lady Mabel. “You know very well that you said, ‘Let her come,’ Vane! The introduction isn’t complete, yet. This is my cousin, Vane—Lord Dalesford.”

Dalesford raised his hat and seemed to wait; and Diana said, with a smile:—

“My name is Bourne; Diana Bourne.”

As Dalesford had not sought to learn the name of the Wedbury schoolmistress, it brought no reminiscence to him. But Lady Mabel exclaimed, with renewed interest:

“Oh, I know! I heard that you had taken Rivermead; that you were coming to live here. What a beautiful little place it is! I am so glad to see you. We have heard so much about you.”

“So much about me?” echoed Diana.

“Yes; people, especially country people, will talk, you know. Some of them say that you are a famous opera singer—”

“My dear Mabel!” chided Dalesford, in a low voice.

But Diana only laughed.

“I’m sorry to disappoint you,” she



Diana pretended to pout. "That's just the one drawback of being disgustingly rich," she said. "I find you can't do quite as you like."

said. "I am not famous for anything. I am simply—myself."

Lady Mabel drew nearer to her, and looked up at her with a smile.

"How—how prettily you said that! Merely yourself! And that's enough, isn't it? And, in your case, quite enough! Oh, I wish I knew you!—I mean, I should like to know you. I'll ask Aunt Selina to call, may I? You won't mind—Tubby is nearly dry now. But I've wetted your shawl; it's soaking! We'll bring it back to you. May we? No; that won't do, for then Aunt Selina will know that Tubby got wet. But you'll let us call?"

"I shall be very pleased," said Diana.

"Come, Mabel!" Dalesford called from the punt.

Lady Mabel held out her hand to Diana.

"I hope you'll let us be friends!" she said, her large eyes expanding girlishly. "I have no friends, excepting Vane, and he"—eying him accusingly—"is only a man—and a cousin!"

She held Diana's hand until Dalesford called again to her, then she sprang into the punt, and Dalesford, raising his hat, sent the boat upstream.

"Oh, Vane, what a beautiful, what a perfectly lovely girl!" cried Mabel. "Sit still, you tiresome brute; you're dry now! Did you ever see such beautiful eyes! And such a mouth! I—and I'm only a girl!—wanted to kiss it! What you must have felt! But you are one of those men who never enthuse. I'll get Aunt Selina to call on her. I want to know her, to see more of her. Now, *that* is my ideal of perfect womanhood!"

"Is that so?" asked Dalesford, but, though his voice was indifferent, he was mentally disturbed. For the face, the voice, had impressed him, and recalled vague memories.

And Diana? His presence, the artless words of Lady Mabel, had recalled the night she had helped him, dressed his wound. She returned to the house, her mind in a chaos of emotion.

TO BE CONTINUED.

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An Easter Letter

Mademoiselle New York
to
Miss Subb-Urban

A hat, you say,
For Easter day?
What shall it be,
Lolotte, *ma mie*?

Sombre or bright,—
With flowers bedight,
Or plumes and quills
And silken frills?

But give it name,—
Thou Golden Dame
Whose winsome face
A crown would grace,—

And skill untold
A hat shall mold
Whose like, I ween,
Was ne'er yet seen.

Upon one side
Must it abide,
Or tilt afore
With brim galore?

Or brazen flare,—
As who should dare
To say it "nay"
By light of day!—

Or fashioned be
That all may see
The ballets' toes
Across its bows?

Your choice I wait:
Please stipulate
Your heart's desire.

P.S.—(You need not wire.)

Safeguarding the Home

It is planned, in this series of articles, to present to the readers of "Smith's Magazine" the results of exhaustive investigations which have been made of the methods by which the small savings of the people are encouraged or diverted. The articles are especially designed for the information of plain people respecting the safeguarding of their surplus earnings.—The Editors

FOREWORD

THESE articles are to be addressed directly to men and women with growing families; to the husbands and wives and fathers and mothers of the country whose deepest interests are bound up in protection of the home life.

The man whose greatest care is to provide for the comfort of his wife and children is the one whose attention we are seeking to secure.

The woman who suffers daily, and almost hourly, anxiety for the members of her household will, we hope, find in these articles the means of relieving some, at least, of her doubts.

The man who, on a daily wage, or a small weekly or monthly salary, lays aside a portion of it for the benefit of those dependent upon him, is a man to be encouraged.

Those who add to such a man's difficulties are entitled to any sort of damnation that the gloomiest mediæval theology could conceive of.

Whoever, without reason, discourages such a man's confidence in the soundness of the provision he has made can escape just punishment only because the law has failed.

Let us ask you who read this foreword to take these things home to yourself and reflect upon them.

If you are a father and a husband who has succeeded, by hard work, self-denial and thrift, in laying aside a sur-

plus of your earnings and had put it in a savings bank, and were some day told by a neighbor that he knew that the officers of the bank had misappropriated funds and that the bank was wrecked, how would you feel?

If the neighbor was a man you thought you had reason to believe in, what sort of a state of mind do you think the story would create in you?

If you got the information late Saturday night, for instance, what sort of a day would Sunday be for you?

Can you imagine yourself passing the day in the quiet enjoyment of your usual Sunday occupations? Would there be any rest for you? Would you have any zest for participation in your children's pleasures? Would you have any sympathy with their childish carelessness?

With what sort of feelings would you see your wife's anxious face, and how would you undertake to answer her questions?

We do not believe that the sense of calamity that these questions suggest can be overdrawn.

But if, on Monday morning, you found, upon inquiry, that your neighbor's story was false, maliciously false, what would your feeling be? You would be relieved, of course. But would your relief be sufficient to stifle your bitter resentment?

Do you think that the infliction of any penalty could compensate you for

that thirty-six hours of agony, in which you saw the results of your years of toil wiped out?

Such catastrophes actually do occur. Thousands of men of family have seen their savings, painfully accumulated for the education of their children, swept away. And the occurrence is not so infrequent as to appear impossible in your particular case.

Think over this possibility, and then read what has resulted from our investigation of the reports, circulated on a larger scale, by a man who professes to know all about the doings of the life insurance officials who manage for you a considerable portion of your savings.

It is beyond question that an entirely unnecessary significance, due to conditions of profound social and commercial discontent, has been given to the so-called exposures of "Frenzied Finance," made by Thomas W. Lawson, of Boston. It may reasonably be doubted whether there was, in planning the articles on "Frenzied Finance," any genuine comprehension of the conditions which helped to make them commercially successful.

But it is a fact that the state of the public mind was such as to make them acceptable reading.

Thomas W. Lawson, of Boston, is really a product of existing conditions. He is not a reformer, nor a philanthropist; he is a leader neither in thought nor action. He has caught public attention by the exploitation, in the pages of willing magazine publishers, of an unusual gift of phrase-making. But he is, above everything, constitutionally a destroyer. You may pull down in a week a structure that it has taken months to build. You may wreck in a day an institution that required years of intelligent labor to establish. Lawson's genius is distinctly the genius of disintegration.

Nevertheless, he produces impressions, and they are such as to challenge the notice of serious-minded people.

This is not the first time that sober people have been forced to estimate the possible consequences of the acts of sensation mongers.

Only one phase of the "Frenzied Finance" series will be considered in these articles.

With what the author has to say about Amalgamated Copper and Bay State Gas we shall have nothing to do. His attacks upon individuals may be properly left to be dealt with by those whom they directly concern. Under the circumstances, it is to be presumed that such individuals are amply able to look after themselves.

So far as SMITH'S MAGAZINE and its publishers are concerned, they have no interest in these people nor in their operations, either reciprocal or otherwise.

It may, however, be noted in passing that the "Story of Amalgamated," as told in the articles on "Frenzied Finance," is an old one, except in so far as it has made public its author's self-revelation.

But for the first time, so far as the publishers of SMITH'S MAGAZINE know, an elaborate attempt has been made to connect the management of life insurance companies with the operations of "Frenzied Finance."

For the first time the promise has been made, with a plausibly serious purpose to support it by circumstantial details, to demonstrate the existence of a conspiracy between the officials of life insurance companies and the speculative promoters of Wall Street.

The charge is unreservedly made that the conspiracy exists for the purpose of defrauding policy holders; that funds held in trust by these companies are used and supplied in the speculative adventures of individuals.

In the foreword to his articles, written by Mr. Lawson, it is said that "the savings of the people in insurance companies are always at the absolute service and mercy of the votaries of frenzied finance."

That this was intended as an attack upon the integrity of the management of American life insurance companies is plain enough.

The publishers of *Everybody's Magazine* so interpreted it, for they endeav-

ored to dodge the issue raised by disclaiming responsibility for it.

But even while, by inference, discrediting it, they gave it currency, and so must share with Lawson the odium, if it is found to be false.

Now, with whatever indifference one may be inclined to view the exposure by Thomas W. Lawson of his associates in the Amalgamated scandal, his reflections on the sound and safe direction and supervision of the life insurance companies cannot be disregarded.

The reputations of these institutions ought to be objects of concern as jealous as that which is felt for the good name of a woman.

It is a matter of tremendous consequence to the people.

If it is true that the methods which have controlled life insurance for the past sixty years have been discarded, it ought to be known.

If it is true that the intelligence and energy and integrity which have developed life insurance are now being traded upon for the promotion of reckless and selfish speculation, a debt of gratitude is due to those who make it plain.

If Thomas W. Lawson and his imitators have shown or can show that the interests confided to these companies have been jeopardized by the misconduct of their officers, due credit, with all that it entails, will be freely accorded to them.

Are these interests in danger?

That is the issue that has been raised.

Is the protection which life insurance is designed to supply to the home impaired?

Is any man who holds a policy of life insurance justified in suspecting that when, by his death, his wife and young children have been deprived of his care, the provision he has made for them by years of hard work and self-denial will fail?

There are in the American life insurance companies, approximately, 25,000,000 policies in force, and these average, probably, about \$2,000 each.

This involves the distribution among

the home-builders of the country of the sum of \$50,000,000,000.

In the face of such figures as these, ask yourself whether the question of the stability of these companies and the honesty of their management is or is not one of vital importance.

Has Thomas W. Lawson, of Boston, lied or told the truth about these institutions?

Lawson discredited his allegations when he followed his charges by advising policy holders not to surrender their policies.

One might reasonably be content to stop here with some justification for a continuation of his confidence in life insurance.

But there is one other point touching the general question of the security of this sort of investment, and it may be stated in half a dozen words.

These institutions hold in trust upward of \$2,500,000,000, which are so invested as to enable them to pay annually to their policy holders some \$250,000,000, an amount equal to ten per cent. of their assets, and yet annually lay aside a surplus.

The publishers of SMITH'S MAGAZINE, as holders of life insurance policies, have taken this matter somewhat to heart.

The reflection provoked by the insinuations initiated by Thomas W. Lawson and reiterated by his imitators, that life insurance investments are insecure, was not a pleasant one.

For their own satisfaction they have made an elaborate and somewhat costly investigation of the whole subject, with results that have led them to feel justified in communicating them to their readers.

IT WAS BEGUN, CONTINUED AND CONCLUDED WITH THIS MOTIVE. IT WAS INSPIRED NEITHER BY ANY FEELING OF PREJUDICE AGAINST MR. LAWSON OR HIS IMITATORS, NOR, IT MAY BE PROPER TO SAY, BY ANY PREDILECTION IN FAVOR OF THE INSURANCE COMPANIES.

TOWARD THE LATTER WE MAINTAIN ABSOLUTELY NO RELATIONS SAVE THOSE OF POLICY HOLDERS, AND IN THAT CAPACITY, AS WELL AS IN OUR CAPACITY

AS PUBLISHERS OF THIS MAGAZINE, WE HAVE NEITHER ASKED NOR DO WE EXPECT ANY FAVORS FROM THEM.

Our investigation has demonstrated that the substance of the charges made against the insurance companies is false.

The articles which follow will show that the relations which Mr. Lawson has undertaken to establish between them and "the votaries of frenzied finance" are purely imaginary.

That the control which the latter were said to exercise over the assets of life insurance companies not only does not, but cannot exist.

IF JOHN A. MCCALL, JAMES W. ALEXANDER, RICHARD A. MCCURDY AND JOHN F. DRYDEN AND THEIR SUBORDINATES ARE GUILTY OF THE OFFENSES CHARGED AGAINST THEM BY THOMAS W. LAWSON AND HIS IMITATORS, THEY NOT ONLY OUGHT TO BE PAYING THE PENALTY, BUT THEY WOULD BE PAYING IT NOW.

It will appear that, if the maxim "He who is false in one thing is false in everything" has any virtue, Lawson's whole story, from beginning to end, must be disbelieved—at least so far as its deductions are concerned.

For we will give instances in which he has—it must be presumed with premeditation—lied. There is no other name for it.

We will demonstrate his falsehood categorically by placing his statement and the fact side by side.

We will set forth the essentials of the operations of life insurance companies in a manner to be understood by every one.

There will be enumerated in detail the safeguards which surround the business.

It will appear that strict limitations are imposed upon the conduct of its affairs not only by legislative enactment, but by scientific laws.

When the story is finished it will be evident that the questions of governmental control and publicity in the management of great corporations have been, in this field, largely realized; to an

extent, at least, which makes the truth of the Lawson charges consistent only with an advanced stage of general social degeneration.

For abuses such as are outlined by him could not be tolerated in a self-respecting community having at hand such means of information as already exists.

All these things are to be spread before our readers in the hope that the real facts may serve to allay the uncertainties that have been fostered by the sensational accusations which have sprung from an overweening greed for notoriety.

The myriads of workers of the country have anxieties enough in all conscience, and those who needlessly add to them by the circulation of mendacious statements concerning the safety of small savings, are no better than the man who maliciously endangers life by raising a false alarm of fire in a crowded auditorium.

The thousands of ungazetted heroes and heroines among the home-builders of the country have probably been subjected to a fresh and utterly causeless test of their heroism by the attacks of Lawson.

Following the discussion of life insurance will come some observations upon the kindred topic of building and loan associations.

In the magnitude of their operations in handling the small savings of the people, these institutions rank next to the life insurance companies and savings banks.

There are upward of 5,000 of them in the country carrying on an active and successful business with assets amounting to \$600,000,000 in round numbers, all of which has been contributed in insignificant sums by an army of thrifty workers.

A very high and entirely disinterested authority on the subject has stated of building and loan associations that "no one class of provident institutions in this country, perhaps, has contributed more largely than have building and loan associations to the material welfare of

that portion of our citizens dependent on a daily wage for support."

The fundamental principle of these associations is co-operation in the spirit of home-building and home-owning.

By means of this the opportunity is afforded to their members to accomplish in combination results that, individually and alone, they could never hope for.

The almost uniform success which attended the operations of the co-operative principle in these associations from the start excited the cupidity of a class of adventurers, and various schemes have, from time to time, been floated for no other purpose than to enrich their promoters. They have had nothing in common with the genuine building and loan association, but were designed as fraudulent imitations.

The inevitable disaster which overtook them, and the losses suffered by their innocent stockholders, had the natural effect of impairing confidence in the soundness of the building and loan idea.

Most of the criticism directed against them has been due to ignorance of the just distinctions which should be made between the real thing and the imitation.

In pursuance of our purpose in these articles to encourage the spirit of home growth, we propose to devote the space

necessary to convey to our readers a thorough understanding of the building and loan associations.

We shall also have something to say upon the subject of assessment insurance. And in this connection we wish to reiterate as emphatically as possible that nothing but the truth will be told in these articles. Facts, the knowledge of which will benefit the family, will be furnished to our readers.

We shall explain the theory of life insurance by assessment and explain its operation, and shall tell why the largest of these life insurance associations abandoned the assessment plan and established a reserve.

The series will be concluded by a description of some of the delusions which threaten the material prosperity of the home.

Their name is legion. The fantastic promises held out by the poolrooms and bucket shops and race tracks are not the only ones. The variety of the devices invented by active brains to draw small sums from the credulous is almost endless.

This series we have prepared for the protection of the family. We publish it for the purpose of showing in what and to whom it may entrust its financial interests, and what and whom to beware of.



Love's Treasure-Trove

EYES there may be bright as thine,
Lips more tempting, more divine;
But I care not, no, not I,
Lips and eyes I pass them by.
Roses have a deeper red
Than the hues thy cheeks o'erspread;
E'en the lily hath more grace,
Unsurpassed the pansy's face—
Softly, let me whisper low,
Harken, I would have you know,
Lips and eyes and posies fair
With thy heart cannot compare.

EVERETT McNEIL.



The Better Way.

"Now comes Easter, the feast of renewal. My heart, whether it be touched by the grace of Spring, or by that breath of eternity which the festival of Easter symbolizes, is especially near to those whose hope wavers or has gone out in suffering and in lamentation. For many, life is a great shadow, a long night . . . life, that nightmare which each day begins anew, becomes more poignant with every springtide. Bird songs wake in the wood, the air is full of the whirr of wings, nests are built and made ready for the brood. And why is all this so? To what end save suffering and the grave is this colossal and vain effort for being? . . . The most man knows of life is the pain of living. Those whom the Spring makes melancholy, have the greatest need of the Easter message. It brings joy with it, but not the joy of beings who flourish in the sunshine. . . . It is a joy that has its source in the crucible of pain. Easter is life issuing from death."

CHARLES WAGNER.

The Shadow Ring

By Jeanette Lee

IT was in a little, old pawnshop in Kilmarnock that Miss Leadhall first saw the ring. She held it in her hand, turning it to catch the light from the dusty window and moving it from side to side to watch the soft glow of the stones—four amethysts alternating with opals.

She had come out from Glasgow for the afternoon, and, straying about the town, had happened on the shop, where a pair of old candlesticks in the window—Sheffield plate—had attracted her attention. She had found that she did not want them, but had remained, chatting with the shopkeeper and looking at the treasures he volubly exhibited to her. Then she had seen the ring lying in the tray, and had asked to look at it. He had drawn it out, half hesitating, and handed it to her.

When at last she looked up from it, with a soft smile on her lips, he had withdrawn a little and was taking down old books from their places, slapping them together, peering into them casually, changing marks with elaborate care and shifting them from shelf to counter and from counter to shelf. His eye, over the top of the books, catching hers, he came forward, dusting his hands together, and looking at her intently. She laid the ring on the glass case, where it caught a new gleam of light and shone softly; and looked inquiringly at him across it.

He nodded slowly, his eyes fixed non-committally on the ring. "You like the looks of it, m'em," he said, quietly. "I can let you have it—if you want it—" He stopped and drummed softly on the case with his fingers.

She waited, a little impatient.

He shifted to the other foot, and reached out a hand for the ring. "I can let you have it," he said, turning it about in his hand; "but it comes high."

She waited in silence.

"Ten pounds is what I ask for that ring." He held it affectionately in his hand, tilting it back and forth against the palm.

She glanced at it where it lay. "Ten pounds?" There was a shadow of surprise in the tone.

He nodded. "And I don't care much to sell it, even at that." He looked at her, as if ready to say more.

But she did not question him. Her eyes were on the ring. They had grown subtly darker. "I will take it," she said, holding out her hand.

He hesitated a second, then handed it to her, a look of half regret resting on his face and playing in a curious smile about his mouth. "If you ever want to sell it, m'em, I'll be glad to buy it back," he said.

"Sell it? Why should I sell it?" She had paid him the money and taken up the ring. She ran her finger along the quaint chasing. "It must be very old," she said.

"I wouldn't like to say, m'em. It was made in Venice, I've heard say. It's likely to be older than you and me together, m'em, and more, too."

"And more, too," she said, with decision. She slipped it onto her finger, with a look of happiness, and took up her gloves. "I am glad to have it," she said, nodding to him, pleasantly, and turning to go.

The shopkeeper made no reply, but stood looking after her. His fingers,

resting lightly on the edge of the counter, drummed a little.

At the door she turned back with a quick thought. "Do you happen to remember from whom you bought it?"

"I do, indeed, m'em," with emphasis.

"A woman, I suppose?"

"A woman, m'em."

"What was she like?"

He reflected. "The first one——"

"The first one?" She had started and turned back to him, a little eagerly. "There was more than one, then?"

"Ay, m'em; more than one has had it from me—two of 'em, at least; and how many before that, the Lord only knows—or, mayhap, the devil," he added, as with an afterthought.

"What do you mean?"

He regarded her soberly. "I can't just put it into words, m'em, what I do mean. It's a bit uncanny, that ring, and them that wears it never wears it for long." He was watching it glow on her finger.

She looked down at it fondly. Had it grown a little dull? "I shall wear it always," she said. She looked at him with seeming sudden suspicion. "You ought to be glad to sell it if it brings such bad luck."

"It's never hurt me," said the man, stolidly. "I'm fond of it like, in the case. But if I were a woman, now, I'd not be putting it on my finger—not without I'd lost my sweetheart, or was done with happiness."

The woman had started a little.

"Nor I'd not like to sell it to a woman without telling her what——"

"What was she like—this woman? Tell me about her."

"The first one? Tall and sad-looking like." He gazed into space, as if watching the figure he described. "She'd a grand way with her, and her eyes had the look of the very stones—bright and glowing like on top, you know, m'em—but deep."

Miss Leadhall nodded. Her own eyes were on the ring. She was turning it slowly on her finger.

"She was glad to sell it. I could see from the first. 'Twas not the money

she needed. I dealt fair by her," he added, cautiously. "I give her a good price. But she'd have taken anything I offered. She wanted to be rid of it, m'em." He leaned over the counter, looking at her earnestly. In the depths of his eyes Miss Leadhall fancied she caught a glimpse of something uncanny—or was it mere keenness? She drew back a little, looking at him searchingly.

"She could have thrown it away," she said, slowly—"thrown it away, or dropped it in the river, or hidden it."

He returned the look cannily. "You'd not say it, m'em, not if you knew. It's a way they have with 'em—stones like that." He eyed it distrustfully. "It's money you must get for 'em. Find some living soul as is foolish enough and will take 'em off your hands and pay for 'em—in good clean gold." He softly chinked together the pieces that he still held in his hand.

She smiled a little and shook her head, unconvinced. "And the other one? Was she like that, too?"

"The other one? She was more like yourself, m'em. Same sort o' build, but a bit shorter maybe. A kind of peaceful face, quietlike, with brown hair, brushed soft, and blue eyes. She was a gentle lady, and she took a fancy to the ring, much as you have, m'em."

"And she bought it?"

"She did, m'em. And she wore it away." He seemed considering. "It was six months—maybe a little more or a little less—that she brought it one day, wrapped up in a dozen or so papers, and wanted to sell it back to me." He looked at her significantly.

"Was she poor?"

"Poor she was not, m'em. She had on furs coming to her knees, worth the price of the ring a hundred times over. She said she had no longer a use for it. So I took it from her. I allowed her a good price for it—the same I'd given the tall lady in black, two years before."

"And she has never been in to redeem it?"

"Never has been, m'em, nor ever will be," he said, solemnly.

She looked at him a little startled.

"For when she had give me the ring and I had paid her the price and made out her ticket, she took it like this, m'em"—he held out two fingers with an awkward attempt at grace—"she took

"Tore it up?"
 "Well, not just tore it up, so to speak"—he moved nearer to the window and peered out. "I was standing here, much like this, m'em, watching



"I will take it," she said, holding out her hand.

it like this, and tore it across once and again, and then again, like this, till the pieces fell in bits on the counter and lay there. That's how I know she'll not come back for it, m'em."

They regarded each other for a minute in silence.

"Nor the other, either?" she said at last.

"Nor the other, either. It's a bit uncanny, m'em, to know that she did the like herself."

her down the street, and thinking what a grand way o' carrying herself she had, when she stooped down there by the grating—you can see the place from here—and fumbled at it, and then got up and went on, looking about in a quick sort of way; and when she was out of sight, I just strayed over to the grating and looked down; and there was the bit of yellow paper lodged on the side. I got a crooked stick and hooked it up and brought it in and dried

it off by the fire. Then I locked it up in the safe. It's there now. I can show it to you, if you like."

"No, no," said the woman, hastily. She looked at the ring reflectively. "So that is its history?" she said.

"So far as I know it, m'em; and I'm glad you turned back. For I was doubting in my mind that I'd a right to let you go without telling you what I know. But, you may be sure, there's more to it than what I've told you. Mayhap you'll be finding it out for yourself and bringing it back within the year."

"I shall always keep it," she said, with emphasis. She drew on her glove swiftly, covering the ring from sight. Then she left the shop, and the little bell over the door clanged sharply. Before it had finished sounding, the shopkeeper was at the window. He rubbed a clear place on the dim pane, leaning forward to watch her down the street and out of sight. One could not have told whether the look held more of shrewdness or of fear.

II.

She sat before a small, open fire, looking into the bright glow and turning the ring absently on her finger. She had traveled many miles since she bought it, going north from Edinburgh; and now, at last, she was resting in a tiny hamlet on the north coast. She could hear the waves on the beach pounding through the storm as she sat there. The sound came muffled into the quiet room, forming a hoarse undertone for the sharp sleet spitting against the pane.

The room was dark except for the fire; and the light from the flames sank lower and lower, till it glowed a single fiery spot, deep and red. Miss Leadhall sat looking into it, visions coming and going before her rapt gaze.

She had been out all the afternoon battling with the storm, and had come in with flushed cheeks and eyes shining with a soft glow. The old landlady, as she saw her pass through the parlor to her room, commented that her walk

had done her good. But it was not the walk that had stirred her.

She had climbed up from the beach tired and dispirited. Then, as she turned into the narrow street, she had passed two people, a young man and woman, walking, stiff and dour, on opposite sides of the road. She had not noticed them in passing, nor could she have told how they looked. But something had prompted her to turn, and she had surprised a glance between them. It was this that had changed the world for her. It was a glow of rose in the gray day.

She was thinking of it now, dwelling on the tenderness that lit the stern Scotch features of the man and the girl's trembling lips.

Miss Leadhall had not thought of love for many months. Her friends would have told you she had not thought of it for years. It was eleven years ago that Elliot Harben had placed on her finger the ring of rubies and pearls—four rubies alternating with pearls. The one that she absently turned on her finger was a miniature shadow of it. It held a soft, still light—where the other flashed and glowed; but it was very like it, in a faded, far-off way; and something had moved Miss Leadhall to buy it.

She had not owned to herself that she had bought it for a memory; and each step of the way north she had fought back the knowledge, till here, at last, in this dreary spot, it had forced itself upon her. She had been going back over it all in her mind, while the surf boomed down below on the beach and the rain swirled against the glass.

It was a June day—roses and sunshine—the day she gave it back to him. The quarrel was nothing. She could not remember now, through the years, what it was about. She had drawn off the ring in a passion of resentment and thrust it toward him, and he had taken it and turned on his heel and left her—there in the garden. Later he had sent her a note—three lines. The ring would be hers again if she chose to ask for it. And that was the end.

Her pride had risen against her

heart. The days had gone by and she had made no sign—till, at last, it was too late. In the social life of the little town they could not keep apart. So he spoke with her, danced with her, and came sometimes to the house. But he never went into the garden.

They sat on opposite sides of the main aisle in church and grew older together through the years; until now she was twenty-nine, sitting alone before the fire, on a winter's night, in a north Scotch town, with the wind howling outside. And before her danced the look in a Scotch girl's eyes as she raised them to her lover out in the gray storm.

Miss Leadhall's eyes were a little moist, and she brushed her hand impatiently before them as they stared intently into the deep red glow. Slowly the fiery spot dwindled. It shrank to a pin point, and a soft, white light glowed about it, and grew and expanded and lifted itself and spread in thin mists that drew away slowly from a garden—a garden of June roses. Not her garden. It was like no garden she had ever seen. Tall columns, quaint clipped trees, and long vistas stretching away; and everywhere roses, white and crimson and pink.

In the near distance a young girl stood picking one, her arm half lifted, her face turned away; and down the bordered walk behind her came a man. Miss Leadhall could see the man's face quite clearly as he approached. It was dark and smiling, with something lurking in it that one could not name. He carried himself with a little swagger of youth, and the velvet cloak swinging from his shoulders outlined the youthful grace of his figure.

If the girl had heard him she gave no sign. She stood with her arm raised, her face a little averted, like a statue among the flowers, waiting. And when he had come quite near to her, he lifted his hand to hers among the roses, and drew it down softly. As she turned her face slowly, he bent and kissed it.

Then they came down the walk together, his arm about her and her dress gleaming white against the swinging

cloak. He leaned toward her, as they walked, talking in quick, earnest tones, his hand seeking the velvet case at his side and drawing from it a tiny ring. It flashed, red and white, in the sunlight. The hand sought hers and found it, and the ring slipped to its place.

Then the girl lifted her face to her lover—lifted it with a look of tremulous worship. Miss Leadhall started in her chair, gasping, protesting. The face—her own face! She was in the vision—a part of it—her lover's arm about her—his warm breath—and the ring was pressing to its place, down, down. And a voice murmured passionately. She was filled with shame and a sweet, shy sense of rest—such as comes in dreams. Then a burning kiss was pressed upon her lips and she wrenched herself away, dragging the ring from her finger with a quick, shamed cry. It fell with a click on the hearthstone and Miss Leadhall dropped to her knees, her face flushed and her eyes filled with scorching tears, as she groped in the ashes.

The coals had fallen apart and the flame leaped in a hundred merry gleams. The red stones glowed softly to her from the edge of the ashes. She drew the ring out, brushing the dust from it and replacing it slowly on her finger.

Then she crossed the room and drew back the curtains, opening wide the heavy shutters. The storm had passed and the moon was struggling behind dark clouds, rimming them with light and glancing on the waves that still tossed to the motion of the storm.

III.

It was many days before Miss Leadhall recovered from this experience of the half light. She had reasoned to herself that it was a purely subjective one, auto-hypnotic. The suggestion of the Scotch lovers and the bright ball of fire would account for it all. Nevertheless, she found herself starting at sudden sounds and trembling at shadows. One might have fancied a look, almost of expectation, in her eyes at times, when she turned quickly about and peered into the darkness behind her.

But travel and sunshine and a care-free life effaced the night of the storm. Gradually her face resumed its look of quietness and her eyes glowed with clear lights again. But Miss Leadhall only knew that she slept well at night and moved in a world of beauty by day.

The Irish moors, whither she had come, grew subtly alive with color and charm; and the sky drifting above them, deepened and ran in swift shadows along the earth. Wandering among them by day, she caught the spirit of it, and was glad. She would stay here always, in the land of still light and mystery and shadows.

IV.

This was the beginning of a new, strange life for Miss Leadhall. Whatever it was that had happened to her, it admitted her into another plane of existence. Through it she came into a new, bewildering power. At a touch, the doors of memory would swing wide to her, and she passed through them into the land of shadows—into this new world in which she was no mere on-looker. The shadows took possession of her and lived over their tragedies and joys in her heart.

Sometimes the experiences were bitter and sometimes strangely sweet; and through them all she came into sympathy with the world. No corner of the past that the ring had known was closed to her. She could wander at will in Venetian gardens or under English skies. Wherever the ring had been, she went. Whatever it had known, she became. Life broadened for her, and deepened.

For days at a time, it is true, she would experience nothing but the quiet, uneventful life of an American woman traveling leisurely toward the south of England. Then something in her journey would stir her. A face, an odor, a whispered sound would call her over into the shadowland; and her quiet life slipped from her, like a garment, as she ran.

She hardly knew, at times, in which world she dwelt—so silently and swiftly

did she pass the boundaries. Sometimes she grew afraid of this and feared for her sanity. Then she removed the ring and stepped out under the stars, and was her own quiet self again—without desire, without pain. For a few moments she would breathe deeply. Nothing had happened to her; nothing could happen. Her life was fixed and calculable; as it was now, so would it ever be.

Then she would look up at the stars in quiet thankfulness, and, creeping over her, would come the longing for life—to live, not vegetate. She would steal, fascinated, back to the house and, slipping the ring on her finger, like a guilty thing, wait, breathless, till the doors of memory flung wide to her and she entered the past again with its weight of joy and its pain.

Her own past, too, was open to her. She had known this from the first, but shrank from testing it—till a day when temptation came too swiftly, with her will asleep, and her soul sped through the past to its own—to the garden of June and roses, and the one who had loved her.

She returned with eyes clear shining and a look of sweet wistfulness. Had she missed so much, all the years? Had she loved her like that? And she had thrust it aside. Her mind began to dwell on him by day and night.

Many times she was on the point of writing to tell him—to ask back the ring. But something held her—an insight that the days of shadow and the past would come to her but once, that when that other ring was placed once more on her finger it would bind her to life forever; the door of memory would be closed to her; and of the intangible world about her she would catch no glimpse or sound, for her eyes would behold that she might not see, and her ears that she might not hear. Some day she would write to him. Some day she would travel north to the little old shop in Kilmarnock.

But the shadow world held her, with its dreams of suffering and struggle and joy, till the depths of nature broke within her. An inner change was going on in her—this subtle, subconscious

woman's life she was living. Her face threw off its mask.

The friend to whose country house she had returned from her journey looked at her searchingly. "You have grown young," she said. "No, not young—what is it? Alive, my dear, but very tired. Do they live so fast in Ireland?"

"They live so fast everywhere," said Miss Leadhall, with a little sigh. She sank back and closed her eyes. It was good to be here, in this beautiful, commonplace house with her stanch, commonplace friend. She would rest a while. She took off the ring and laid it on the stand beside her, absently rubbing the reddened line on her finger.

"What a pretty ring!" said her hostess. She picked it up and slid it on her own finger, turning it in the light. "I am so glad you are here," she said, impulsively, looking across the stand. "I haven't been so happy for years." She sat gazing thoughtfully at her friend, her eyes slowly deepening.

Miss Leadhall glanced at her curiously, half reaching out her hand to reclaim the ring. Then she waited.

The other roused herself with a little laugh. "How funny!" she said—"and how rude!" she added, quickly. "But I saw the funniest thing, Carol, all of a sudden—a little old German house with a woman in it and a lot of children; and an old man had come home and they were all kissing him and crying—"

"How did you know it was Germany?" asked Miss Leadhall, quietly.

The other stared at her. "Everything was German—the room and the

children. It was easy to tell—though it wasn't any place I ever saw," she added, thoughtfully. "They were very happy." She was smiling and turning



... slipped a shining circle down its slim length.

the ring on her finger. Her eyes had grown dark again.

Miss Leadhall watched her almost jealously.

Then, recovering herself, and brushing away the tears that had gathered: "How silly!" she said. "Come, take off your things and we'll have tea. Come down to the study when you are ready."

She had turned toward the door.

Miss Leadhall reached out her hand for the ring, and her friend came back, looking at it absently. She drew it off, silently. Then her face cleared and she smiled in a care-free way. "It is good

to have you here," she said. "I began to think you would never come."

When they had had tea they walked a little in the grounds, until Miss Leadhall went to her room to rest a while before dressing for dinner. The room was half in shadow; a fire burned in the grate and a low couch was drawn up before it with a stand at its head, on which were books and a candle. Miss Leadhall did not light it. She looked for the matches and placed them on the snuffer tray, to be at hand when she woke. She must have a moment's sleep—a moment of the past. She was famished for it. How fat and common Alice had grown!—but very dear. Her eyelids drooped a little; they lifted and held her a second, then dropped again and released her to sleep—to dreams.

Alice was holding her by the shoulder, shaking her sharply. "Wake up, Carol! Wake up! You're dreaming! Don't, Carol! Wake up! It's only a dream!"

Slowly Miss Leadhall's eyes opened—heavily. They looked about the half-light room. They fell on her hand, outstretched on the stand and grasping something fiercely. She bent toward it half shrinking, it would seem. Her fingers gripped the candle snuffers. The point was driven deep into the wood of the stand.

"I have spoiled the stand," she said, hesitatingly. "I'm sorry."

"Never mind the stand, dear." Lighting the candle, her friend came to her side, soothing her protectingly. "You must have had a terrible dream. I heard you and came, but I could not waken you." She took up the hand that lay clinched beside her, smoothing it with gentle touches. It opened to them. "Look, Carol! It has hurt you!"

The setting had been twisted into the palm of the hand and a drop of blood glowed beside the stones.

Miss Leadhall looked at it for a long minute. Her eyes had a startled look. She drew off the ring, slowly.

The other reached out and took it, with a little gesture of interest. "You

won't wear it till the finger is well?" she said. She turned it wistfully in her hand and held it over her finger. "It's very pretty," she said, softly. "I should like to wear——"

But Miss Leadhall held out her hand for it. "No one shall wear it," she said, firmly.

That night she wrote the letter. It was very short, but he would understand. For eleven years she had been too proud to do so, but now she had seen the hearts of men and women, and she knew. Out of the land of shadows she sent him the message.

V.

Two weeks later Miss Leadhall was at home. Her trunks were unpacked in the room that always waited for her; and she sat by her brother's fire in the library, resting.

Across the hearth her sister-in-law regarded her with frank eyes. "You've grown good-looking, Carol," she remarked, in an impersonal tone.

"Have I?" She was leaning back in the big chair, her hands folded in her lap. The children had been playing with "Aunt Caddie," climbing over her, tumbling her about; and her loosened hair fell forward, framing her face.

Her sister surveyed it critically. "You're not exactly handsome——"

"Thank you."

"But there's something——" She paused reflectively. "It's 'the grand air.' You are like an old picture—one of those dames of the French revolution—tragic and scornful and sweet——"

Miss Leadhall had turned her head a little and was smiling skeptically at her.

"Well, it's something like that. You don't belong to this century, do you?" She leaned forward, looking at the slim hands. "Where is that ring?" she demanded.

Miss Leadhall had flushed a little. "What ring?"

"The one you wrote about—that you bought in a pawnshop, you know."

"Did I?" Miss Leadhall seemed to be searching around in her memory.

"How stupid of you, Carol! You wrote about it the day you bought it. You said you were going to wear it all-ways." She wrinkled her forehead. "I cannot remember just what you said. There was some sort of queer history—"

"Oh, *that* one!" Miss Leadhall's voice was indifferent. "I sold it again."

"Sold it?"

"Pawned it, yes." A little smile lurked on Miss Leadhall's lips.

The face turned toward her was half shocked, half indignant. "How could you, Carol? If you needed money, why didn't you cable for it?"

"But I *bought* it in a pawnshop, you know," evaded Miss Leadhall.

"Oh, that's different. Everybody buys things in pawnshops—nice old things. But nobody sells them, except the very lowest."

"Except the very lowest," assented Miss Leadhall.

The door opened behind them.

"George!" protested his wife. "*What* do you think she has done now?" She waved a scornful hand at the chair opposite her.

"Done?" He came across to the fire and rested his arm on the mantel, looking down affectionately at the slight figure with its loosened hair and clear-shining eyes. "She's done what she ought to—come back to the bosom of her family."

"But *how* do you suppose she came? *How* did she get the money to come?" She paused dramatically. "She pawned her jewels!" She finished with a pretty, helpless gesture.

"She did?"

"She did. And *what* shall I tell people when it gets out—Mrs. Turnleigh and the Burtons?"

"Refer them to Carol. She generally does the right thing." He was looking down at her. "I saw Elliot as I came home." He had taken a cigar from his pocket and was looking at it reflectively. "He said he was coming up this evening."

She lifted her face a little.

"I told him you had come." He was fumbling among the trinkets on the

mantel and spoke absently. "He said he'd be right up. *Where* do you keep the matches, Minnie?"

"They're over on this end. You're not to smoke in the library, you know very well."

"Just this once?"

"Not this once, or ever."

The doorbell had rung. Some one was being shown into the front parlor. He came forward through the long rooms.

"It's Elliot," said Minnie, looking back. "He'll want to smoke, too. Come away!"

"Just this once," he protested.

But she whisked him away and closed the door softly.

The man paused in the doorway, looking in. She had half risen from her chair and her hair fell about her shoulders. She gathered it up, looking toward him with sweet eyes. "Have you brought it?"

"Yes." He came across to her, slowly, gathering in the picture from across the years.

She held out her hand, almost shyly.

"Not that one," he said. He lifted the other and slipped a shining circle down its slim length. It flashed crimson and white.

She looked down at it fondly. "It is more beautiful than I remembered," she said, slowly.

"Everything is more beautiful," he responded. He had come nearer to her.

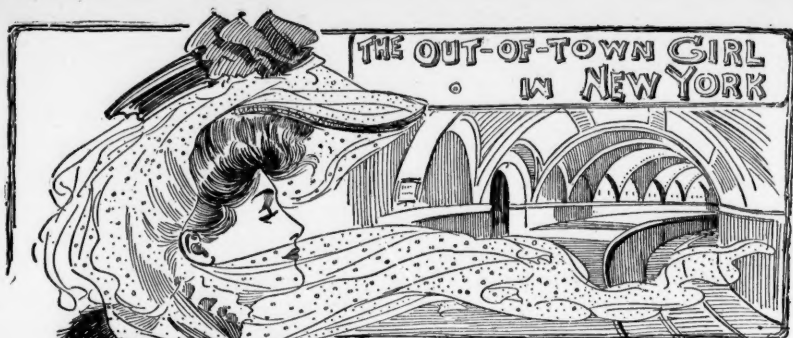
She studied his face. "I think it is the shadows."

"The shadows?" He was watching the smile on her lips.

She nodded. "You won't understand. They are all about us—everywhere." Her lips remained parted as if listening.

He pushed back the cloud of hair from her face and drew it nearer. "But this is not a shadow," he said.

And the ring? In the little, old shop in Kilmarnock it lies in its faded plush case. And through the dusty window a face looks out, now and then, spider-like and gray.



By Grace Margaret Gould



the tumult like another goddess, is often at a loss, not for something to do, but for the time to do the innumerable things that press upon her attention.

The out-of-town girl, then, may well knit her pretty brows on first arriving in the great city. The fairyland is before her, but oh! she needs so badly the fairy godmother to take her by the hand.

It is the purpose of this department to show the way to the out-of-town girl coming to New York. To give her the proper hint, so that she will know what are the prettiest and the latest novelties in the shops, and how and when to wear them.

To tell her of the latest fad in luncheons, and to give her, perhaps, a recipe to take home for the making of some delectable dish that she has never heard of before. Then she must be educated in beauty culture, and learn, besides, what is newest and best in art, music and the drama.

Perhaps the out-of-town girl has never heard of a Lenten luncheon. Her idea of Lent may be solely of sack-cloth and ashes. Perhaps she doesn't know that the New York girl finds Lent one of the busiest seasons of the year; that though she entertains quietly, she entertains much, and that with appointments with her dressmaker and her *masseuse*, to say nothing of her good deeds, her time is filled to overflowing.

It may interest the girl who is in

NEW YORK is a hard nut to crack for the stranger. One is more apt at first to rap one's fingers than to get at the meat.

To see New York is good; but to know how to see it is better.

To know how—that is the all-important thing in the great city—the first step toward getting there.

A little knowledge is a dangerous thing, especially in New York. One who doesn't know how is likely to be taught by that rudest of preceptors, experience.

New York City in many ways is a permanent exposition. Here, seasons in and seasons out, are displayed the latest and best of human skill, ingenuity and genius. Even so well poised and worldly a personage as the New York girl, who walks serenely through

New York just before Lent, to hear of a club which a certain number of New York girls are forming. It's a Lenten Lunch Club, and there are eight members. The object of the club is to do good, and the carrying out of the purpose is most unique. The first luncheon is given by the president, and it is then that the plan of the club is explained. Each member is given the name of a person who is in need of cheering, or of any help, in fact, and she is expected to call upon this person during the week after the luncheon. Yellow is the color scheme of the first luncheon, and daffodils are used for the center piece, around which are eight little yellow, downy chickens, and in each chicken's mouth is a yellow satin ribbon. The ribbons extend to the eight place plates, and to the end of each ribbon is attached a small notebook and pencil. The notebooks are bound in yellow and white art cretonne, and are for the purpose of not only writing the name and address of the one to be visited, but to record after the visit has been made anything of special interest that occurred, as well as any new discovery as to the person's needs.

When the club meets a second time,

each member brings her notebook to the luncheon and reads her notes on the visit she made. She also puts in the little book the name and address of some one else whom she is to visit the next week. Eight luncheons are given, and the same idea is carried out at each one. At the last luncheon, the girls plan for the filling of eight Lenten baskets, and each member pledges to fill a basket with good things to eat, and to take it herself to some one who needs it.

Whether it is a chafing-dish supper, a Lenten luncheon, or just an informal home dinner, to which she happens to be invited, the out-of-town girl is sure to quickly discover that every one is eating green peppers, served up in the most tempting of ways. They give the touch that the epicure likes to a Welsh rare-

bit, and chopped up with olives and mixed with a trifle of mayonnaise, they make an excellent filling for a sandwich. It will be wisdom on the part of the out-of-town girl if she will buy a small blank book for the purpose of copying any of the unusual recipes she is sure to be able to hear of while in this big town.

Here is a simple little chafing-dish



Quite the latest muff.

recipe which she may think worth while writing down. Get a finnan haddie weighing about two pounds, boil it ten minutes, or just long enough so that it can be easily picked off the bone; care-

er for just one minute, and then serve spread on hot toast. The lover of the Welsh rarebit is sure to like this variation of his favorite dish.

The out-of-town girl may have among her most prized possessions a cameo brooch which belonged to her grandmother. If she has, she will be glad to see that the New York jewelry shops are conspicuously displaying cameos. And the newest way to wear the cameo is to mount it upon a flat, half-inch wide gold band, which is made to fit the arm snugly, and to be worn on the left arm about four inches above the wrist. With the elbow - sleeve gowns, which are so much the fashion right now, this novel cameo bracelet looks most effective. It may astonish the girl who is in New York for a time to know that the New York girl would never think of wearing two of these bracelets. One is all that she considers the



Quaint old brooches for my ladye.

fully shred it, then put the shredded fish in a chafing dish with about a quart of milk and two green peppers, which have been first chopped into very small pieces. When this comes to a boil, thicken with a little flour and serve spread over thin slices of toast.

Another tempting morsel to serve at a chafing-dish supper is the old-time Welsh rarebit, appearing under the name of Mexican goulash. To make it, follow any reliable recipe for Welsh rarebit, then add a can of French kidney beans and two finely chopped green peppers—the peppers must be chopped in the smallest of pieces. Boil all togeth-

mode, and it must always be worn on the left arm.

If the out-of-town girl when in New York wishes to do as the smart New York girl does, she will take a massage treatment two or three times a week. She knew before coming that the New York girls' pet fad was beauty culture, and she had read, of course, columns in the newspapers about the beneficial effects of cold cream, and of how she should rub to reduce the double chin, and banish all the telltale lines of worry and age. But it is not until she becomes actually chummy with a typical New York girl that she will be impressed

with the real importance of having her ears massaged. But it is ear massage that is the special fad, and the reason of it is that the earring is all the vogue again. And since the earring of necessity attracts attention to the ear, why, of course, the New York girl is determined that her ear shall be worth seeing.

A well shaped, prettily pink ear is really more of an attraction than many women realize. If you stop to think of it, a lifeless, colorless, old-looking ear is surely no addition to a pretty woman's face. It needs massage to keep it looking its best, and that is just what it is getting these days, if it happens to belong to the up-to-date New York girl. The beauty specialist will tell you that a colorless ear indicates poor circulation, and that the correct way to permanently restore the pretty pink color is not to dash a little cold water upon the ear, but to bathe it in a good, pure cold cream, and then to gently massage the ear with the tips of the fingers. This treatment not only gives life and color to the ear, but improves and refines its texture. Then, too, there is no better tonic for the ear than to properly massage the nerve about it. This not only stimulates the circulation all through the ear, but is an excellent remedy for soothing tired nerves.

The earrings which the out-of-town girl sees in the ears of the fashionable New York girl are not of the long, old-fashioned pendant sort, but are screw earrings, and those most in fashion are baroque pearls, with no setting at all.

Of course, the out-of-town girl goes shopping, and as all things may look new to her, she may be glad to know what to buy and what not to. It is superfluous, of course, to tell her about standard and staple goods; she has a mother, you may be sure, and she hasn't been brought up on a desert island, either. But she wants to be up-to-date, to know the latest wrinkle, the newest thing out. There is a chicness about the New York girl which she secretly envies. May she not be able to find it?

Everywhere she sees the high girdle.

More than half the spring dresses show them, and each one seems to embody some idea more novel than the last. The New York girl, since she has taken to making her waist smaller, is becoming very fond of the high girdle.

Something new and fetching that has just been devised is the Marguerite girdle. And the very best part of it is, that the out-of-town girl may not only see it, but, if she wants to, can easily make it for herself. The girdle is seven inches high, and is a crushed girdle of white satin messaline, coming to a point in front. It is carefully bound back and front. Two large marguerites cover the fastening in front, giving the girdle a very novel touch. To make the centers of the big daisies a button mold is used, a trifle larger than a quarter. This must be carefully covered with yellow satin. Small oblong pieces of white satin form the petals. To make them, a small oblong of white satin is folded in half, and the short, straight edges at one end are sewed together. This seam is then brought down against the middle crease, and the bottom edges of the triangle thus formed are gathered and pulled tight and then sewed to the button; six petals form the marguerite. These satin flowers are much used now as a trimming, in place of lace medallions.

Many of the new shirt-waists she discovers are made with a flat, round collar, which forms a trimming for the waist. The stock, of course, is worn as usual. Now, the very smart thing to do is to have this collar hand embroidered. The New York girl may not always do it herself, but she is sure to have it done, for it gives just the chic touch desired to the waist. Imagine a lavender linen waist with a three-inch flat collar of white linen embroidered with violets in their natural colors, or a pale green waist with the collar of the same material, only attractively embroidered in white daisies with yellow centers, and a garland of the embroidered daisies as a finish to the cuffs. It is just such little things as these that have given the New York girl her reputation for being the best dressed woman

in the world. Any girl, even if she isn't an artist with her needle, may embroider the collar herself, having it stamped in whatever design she prefers.

Then there is the subway veil, which

touch of color, they are also effective in raspberry red, orchid purple or russet brown. The veil should be three and a half yards long and worn over the face, covering the hat as well. It may



A dainty New York Girl.

also needs a bit of embroidery to have it look its smartest. This veil is very necessary to the girl who rides much in the underground, as it softens the glaring white light which is so trying on the eyes as one whizzes by the stations with their white-tiled walls. The best liked subway veil is of delicate gray chiffon with an edge of white taffeta ribbon, or gray or black, if one prefers. French knots in graduated sizes are embroidered on the ribbon, and they look stylish in black on the white or gray border, and yet if one wishes a

either be tied in the back in a full bow, the bow pinned to the hat and the ends falling to the shoulders, or the ends may be crossed in the back and then brought around and tied in front in a bow.

A fetching looking New York girl seen boarding a subway train the other day wore a veil of gray chiffon with green four-leaf clovers embroidered on the ribbon edge, and she carried her subway tickets in a flat little case, just large enough to hold them, shaped like a miniature cardcase, and made of gray leather with an embossed four-leaf

clover in green as the outside decoration.

The out-of-town girl cannot be in New York long without discovering that things are not always what they seem. What she might readily mistake for a silver cardcase, much like one belonging to her grandmother, is apt to prove on inspection to be nothing more than a toilet requisite—a little silver book filled with leaves containing a delicately perfumed powder preparation, just the most convenient thing in the world for rubbing the shine off one's nose. The powder leaves are nothing new to the New York girl, but the silver cases for holding them are.

Parasols which are really work baskets are another surprise to the out-of-

town girl. To all outward appearances they are just the same sort of parasols with which the summer girl coquettes; but they are partly opened, and the inside is made into many bags, for holding buttons and tapes and other things needful to the well stocked work basket. The parasol stands firmly by being fastened to a square mount, which is covered with the same silk as the parasol.

Then there are fluffy, lacy looking affairs, which look for all the world like work bags of soft silk, lace and chiffon, when in reality they are the very newest thing in muffs.

Yes, lace muffs are coming with the flowers, the spring sunshine and the Easter fashions.



To An Easter Lily

LILY, with thine heart of gold,
 (Dead are the loves of long ago)
 Pure thou art, and fair, and cold,
 Like to one I know;

Unto whom—not over bold—
 (Dead are the loves of long ago)
 Breathe from out thy blanchéd fold:
 "Sweet, I love thee so."

L. ALBION.

The Touch of the Child

By Tom Gallon



JAMES FULLARD—a very young-looking colonel, by the way, with hair but slightly streaked with silver at the temples, and with a back as straight as when he had first denned uniform—stood at the window, looking out over the grounds of his house. The colonel was thoughtful, for the colonel had been reminiscent but lately, and his thoughts were all with the past.

The colonel's oldest friend sat in the darkening room behind him, and watched the colonel's broad back at the window. From outside, in the summer twilight, came the slow, long-drawn cawing of rooks flying homeward; the glow from the sunset outlined the colonel's figure sharply.

"Never knew you had a brother," said Mr. Godfrey Steen, from his place in the room.

"I haven't had—for the past fifteen years," said the colonel, slowly. "It's a curious thing I should speak about him now. One doesn't care always to dive back into the past. Such a fine fellow he was!"

"And you've never told me anything about it!" exclaimed the friend. "There's some mystery here, Jim—am I probing an old wound if I ask what it is?"

"It is an old wound—but it was probed to the depths long ago," said the other. "I've kept it secret all these years because—well, because I had made a sort of vow about the thing, and the vow is not yet fulfilled. I'd like to tell you the story, though."

He turned with his back to the window and leaned there, with arms folded

on his broad breast and his face in shadow. When he began his story, the voice in which he spoke was altogether different from that soft, easy tone with which his friend was familiar.

"It all happened more than twelve years ago," began the colonel. "The boy was my only brother—much younger than I was, and—well, just a trifle wild, perhaps. I kept a sharp eye on him, and got him out of more scrapes than one; which is, after all, only an elder brother's privilege. At the time of his—his death—the colonel's voice shook a little, and he cleared his throat huskily—"I was far away from him; I reached him—too late."

"It was sudden, then?" asked Steen, glancing up at him for a moment.

"Very sudden," said the colonel, grimly. "The boy was shot—killed by an older man on some ridiculous pretext—and left there—dead, with all his sins and blunders on his head—while his murderer escaped."

"How did it happen?" asked the other, after a pause.

"They called it a duel," replied the colonel. "The young fool—God forgive me for calling him so now—had been drawn on to play for high stakes, had had a quarrel with a man, and had been challenged to fight. He knew nothing of the game, but the other was an expert; the boy was shot through the heart, the other man escaped."

Godfrey Steen rose to his feet abruptly, and took a turn or two about the room. He could not see the colonel's face, and his own was very indistinct, by reason of the gathering darkness.

"Anything the matter, Godfrey?" asked the colonel, casually.

"No—only it all sounds so horrible," replied the other. "A young life cut short—a matter that might have been prevented. But go on, Jim."

"A young life cut short," said the colonel, slowly. "Yes, old man, that's what it was; that was the brutal part of it. When I got to the boy, and saw him lying there, and remembered what he had been, and what he might have been, I was like a madman. I was beside myself. I raised my hands to the dark heaven that seemed to frown above me, and I cried aloud to it to give me the man who had done this thing. I was my brother's keeper; I would have an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But the man was gone; and no one knew anything about him—no one even knew his name."

"What did you do?" asked Steen, after what seemed a long pause.

"I scarcely know what I did at first; I was mad. I had a memory of the boy who had played in these very grounds with me when we were both little fellows; of the gentle mother who had held us both in her arms, and prayed for us both every night of her short young life. I almost threw up my commission; I wanted to get away—I wanted to do something desperate. When I had buried him, I knelt beside his grave, and I made the vow of which I told you."

"What was it?" asked the other, gently.

"I vowed that I would find the man, whoever he was, who had done this thing; I vowed that I would stand face to face with him—only, on this occasion he should meet his match. It should be his life or mine; and I would win. I vowed that I would follow him all over this small world of ours, and that I would not turn from that quest while life was left to me."

"It's a long time ago," said Steen, slowly. "What has happened?"

"Nothing," said the colonel, sadly. "I got on in my profession; promotion became rapid, because I was lucky; I met the dear woman who is my wife; and finally came home to settle down. Other voices called to me, other ties

bound me; yet still in the dead watches of the night, sometimes I see again that grave in a foreign land and think of my vow. The voice of the dead boy seems to call me coward—and I remember bitterly enough that the man who killed him probably goes on his way, secure, smiling and unrepentant."

"But suppose—only suppose, you know—that he *was* repentant?" urged Godfrey Steen, quietly. "Come, Jim, you admit that this boy—this brother of yours—was wild. Is it not possible that he was a little to blame?"

"When I meet him he shall give me his explanation," said the colonel, grimly. "For, mark you this, Godfrey, I am as firm as ever in regard to the matter. It has rankled here"—he struck his breast with one clinched hand as he said the words—"for twelve long years, and I have not forgotten. Put me face to face to-day with the man who butchered that boy, and I fling everything to the winds—home, wife, child, everything; and I strike down my man."

Silence again for a moment or two, while the colonel turned and looked out of the window; the silence was broken by the quiet voice of the friend.

"My dear Jim, there is another way of looking at it. I heard a story once, told me by a very dear friend of mine. He had been placed in just such a position. There had been a quarrel; in the dawn of a gray morning he had gone out to meet his man—and had killed him. Yet the man he sent to an untimely grave was far happier than he could ever hope to be, for the figure of the man who fell before his fire rose up forever, and was with him night and day." Godfrey Steen had turned away, and was beating a restless foot on the floor.

"And you would sympathize with the man who murdered the other?" asked the colonel.

"In that sense, yes," said Steen. "By the way, where was it that this boy was killed?" he asked.

"At a place on the Gulf of Mexico, near Vera Cruz," said the colonel, shortly.

"Near Vera Cruz!" repeated the other man in a whisper.

"Mazango, they called the place," said the colonel. "What's the matter? Did you speak?"

"No, I didn't speak," said Godfrey Steen. And then, in a lower voice, to himself, he added: "Mazango—with the long street—and the huts—and the blue bay below. Oh, God!"

The colonel moved swiftly, and switched on the electric light. Then he moved more quickly still, and dropped his hand on the shoulder of Steen. Almost roughly he turned him round.

"You know Mazango?"

"Once—and once only," stammered Godfrey Steen, avoiding his eyes. "For an hour or two—I was there by accident."

The colonel dropped his hand from the other's shoulder.

"You are hiding something from me, Godfrey," he said, in a low voice. "This—this friend of yours—who was he?"

"Jim, you're on the wrong scent," said Steen, looking at him with a haggard face. "I give you my word—"

"I think I am on the right scent," said the other, slowly. "You have already told me about this man—friend of yours—who goes out on a gray morning, and kills his man. Then you know Mazango; the reference to it on my part is painful to you; in one little phrase you are able to describe it all. The long street—and the huts—and the blue bay below," Godfrey, I've found the man!"

"You are wrong—utterly wrong," said Steen, slowly. "Come, Jim, pull yourself together; you have brooded over this until you are in a condition to imagine all sorts of things."

"Godfrey Steen," said the colonel, slowly, "you and I have been friends—almost brothers—for years; next to my wife and my child—I had almost said *before* them—I place my old friend. I want to hunt down this man; I believe you to be in a position to help me. At least, give me the name of your friend—this mysterious man, of whom I have never heard, and who killed a man in a duel."

"He—he is dead," replied Steen.

"He is not—you are merely trying to shield him. Come—his name!"

"Do you think, for a moment, Jim, that you can punish me more than I—?"

"Punish *you*?" The colonel stopped, and looked blankly at his friend. "Why should I punish you? What have you to do with it?"

"There—there was no friend, Jim; I was the man!"

Dead silence again, save for the heavy breathing of the colonel. Then the silence was broken by a shrill, childish voice from the semi-darkness outside. "Daddy," it called.

The colonel seemed to shake himself together, and then strode to the window.

"Not now, dearie," he called; "not now. I'm busy." He turned, and came back into the room.

"Forgive me," he said, in his courteous fashion. "I did not want the child to come in. I'm afraid I did not quite understand you," he added.

"Twelve years ago," said Godfrey Steen, in a voice so low that the other had to bend forward to catch the words, "I was wandering about aimlessly in Mexico—doing but little good, and, I fear, some little harm. Some ill fate brought me to Mazango; I was there for twenty-four hours only."

"Go on," said the quiet voice of the colonel.

"In the one miserable little hotel in the town I met two or three men of my own nationality—men not of the cleanest, by any means. One of them was a young boy, drinking rather more than was good for him, and inclined to play higher than he could afford."

"Don't blacken the dead!" broke in the colonel, sternly.

"Before Heaven, I'm not!" protested the other, earnestly. "I was persuaded to play; and I lost. At first, that is; afterward I won, and won heavily. Perhaps I, too, had drunk more than was good for me; be that as it may, I quarreled with the young man. I never knew his name; they called him Sidney."

"My brother's name was Sidney."

"The boy struck me, and the others hastily fixed a meeting between us. He had accused me of cheating; I—well, I

had retorted something I would have bitten my tongue out for the next moment. But it was too late then; the thing had to be carried through."

"And you met this boy—and killed him?" The voice of the colonel was deadly.

"You wrong me. At first I fired in the air; I have the mark of his bullet in my shoulder now. Then the hot-blooded fellow came to me, and accused me of treating him like a child, and demanded that I should fire again. I said nothing about my own wound, although I was mad with the pain of it; I fired again—and killed him."

The colonel had moved to the table, and was seated there, with his face hidden in his hands. After a moment or two Godfrey Steen ventured near him, and even laid a hand on his shoulder.

"Jim, I swear I never meant——"

The colonel sprang up, and faced his old friend, as he must have faced death many and many a time on the field of battle; there was no relenting in his eyes.

"You killed my brother; you are the man for whom I have been looking through twelve long, blind years. You have eaten at my table—grasped my hand a thousand times—kissed my child; but it shall not save you. I took a vow beside the boy's grave; I will not break it. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life; I mean to kill you."

Godfrey Steen nodded quietly.

"Very good," he said. "By an accident, I killed a man who was a perfect stranger to me; it seems he was your brother. By an accident you have discovered the truth, and have laid bare an old wound that I have tried in vain to heal. By night and by day, through all the years that have gone by, I have stood—hundreds and hundreds of times—on that plain outside the little town of Mazango, with the blood from my wound trickling down inside my shirt; and have heard again the sharp crack of the two revolvers; have seen the boy fall, and lie quiet. My life is yours; do with it what you will."

There was quite a long silence in the

room, while the two men stood watching each other. From somewhere in the quiet house the sound of a child's voice could be heard, singing; the sound floated, incongruously enough, into that room where the grim tragedy was to be played out. The colonel waited until the sound had died away, and then he spoke.

"I am, I think, a man of honor, and a man of my word, Godfrey Steen," he said. "From your point of view, you met my brother in fair and open fight; that does not change my resolution, but it changes a little what I meant to do. It has been in my mind a long time to shoot down the man who killed Sidney Fullard like a dog, if I should be so fortunate as to meet him; now I will give you a chance."

"I want none," said Steen, quietly.

"As you met my brother, so you shall meet me," said the colonel. "Only, in this case, the chances will be more equal. I was one of the best shots in the army before I retired. Face to face you and I will stand, and may Heaven judge between us!"

"I will not meet you," said Steen.

"Not meet me? I'm afraid I don't understand. As a man of honor——"

"As a man of honor, I will not stand up before the man I have called friend and fire at him," said Steen. "As a man of honor, I will not even make the attempt to sweep out of life a man whose hand I have grasped, whose wife is one of my dearest friends, whose child I love better than my life. I am a lonely man, Colonel Fullard, and this house has been my home; I will not defile it."

"You have defiled it already," retorted the colonel. "For years you have lived a lie; for years my brother has cried to me to avenge his death, and I have stood idle and helpless, and have called you friend. You *shall* meet me."

"I will not. I will go out of your life, if you like; if it will be any satisfaction to you I will put an end to my existence; but I will not meet you. You say that I have done you a wrong already. I might do you, and those for whom I care, a greater wrong still."

"I will not forget my vow," said the colonel, slowly and thoughtfully. "In some way or other you shall meet me. It's your life or mine; what shall decide?"

"Anything you like," said the other, wearily. "The spin of a coin?"

"No," said the colonel. "This is no matter of chance; it is a matter of justice. We are in the hands of God, and God's most innocent thing shall decide. The child, Winnie, shall judge between us!"

"Jim—are you mad?"

"No, I was never more sane in my life. This shall be the supreme test; you and I will sit quietly in this room, as we have sat so often; the child shall come in."

"And then?"

"Then," said the colonel, sternly, "the man the child first touches will go out of this house and blow his brains out."

"It's perfectly monstrous!" exclaimed Steen. "Besides, in any case, she would go to you first; you are her father."

"And you her dearest friend," said the colonel, bitterly. "I'll take my chance; the child shall decide. Do you agree?"

"Since you are bent on murder—yes," replied Godfrey Steen.

The colonel pressed the white button against the fireplace. When, in a minute or two, the servant appeared, he requested that "Miss Winnie" might be sent to him.

"You and I have sat, often and often, side by side here, talking over old times; we will sit so now. But neither of us will speak to her—understand that."

So the two men sat down with folded arms, side by side, to await the touch of death. When, a moment or two later, the door was flung open, and a little figure appeared framed in the doorway, neither man moved.

"Did you want me, daddy?" asked the child; and never had she looked so pretty as at that moment in the eyes of the two men who loved her. She stood, a frail little creature, with wide blue eyes, and fair curls tumbled about her face, watching them curiously; it was

so strange to find daddy and Uncle Godfrey—she had always called him that—silent in her presence. She came, a little timidly, into the room.

"Daddy—is anything the matter?" The childish voice was pleading, and a little frightened.

"Don't speak—not a word," breathed the colonel to Steen.

She came a little further into the room. Instinctively each man shrank a little as she drew near.

"Oh, you're playing some new game!" she cried, clasping her hands, and looking eagerly from one to the other. "Tell me what it is—tell me quickly."

Neither man spoke; and still that little figure, with death in its hands, hovered before them. Once, the little hand, descending, almost brushed the colonel's knee; once Godfrey Steen, in an agony, could have sworn that the fingers of the other hand almost touched his. Yet still the child—fearful of disturbing some new and delightfully surprising game arranged for her pleasure—held aloof, and watched for the key that should unlock the puzzle to her mind.

All at once she turned and ran round behind the settee. The heads of the two men were so close together that her light breathing touched them both; then, in a moment, the baby hands raised above them dropped suddenly on each of their necks—at the same moment—and drew the two gray heads together.

"Tell me," she whispered. "I can't guess."

When, a little later, the two men stood alone together in the room, Steen was the first to break the silence.

"She touched us both—same time," he said, slowly.

"She almost seemed," said the colonel, in a low voice, "almost seemed to draw us together, Godfrey."

They looked into each other's eyes for the first time; then, on an impulse, and with a little gasp, like two great children forgetting a blunder that has threatened to divide them, clasped hands. And so the feud ended forever.



A beautiful greyhound stood looking at her with sad, friendly eyes.

For Meribah

By Marian Warren Wildman



"REALLY?"

"Yes, really! Burned to the ground. And there ain't another place in the burg where we can play."

"What's Felt going to do?"

"Going on to 'Frisco—we're due there next. Guess we can kill time there for a week, all right." He laughed so boisterously that other passengers on the Pullman turned to stare.

Sometimes Theresa Bannister half yielded to the magnetism of the handsome, easy-tempered "heavy villain" of the De Voe Stock Company. To-day he bored her.

"Mr. Vaughan," she asked, "won't you be so kind as to leave me alone?"

"Anything to oblige you! Only"—he leaned over her, smiling, as he rose—"some day will you tell me *why* you think you're so much better than the rest of us, T'res Bannister?"

He was gone, but the rhythm of the car wheels had caught his parting words and was repeating them mockingly—maddeningly.

"Better than the rest of us—better than the rest of us——"

Was she?

Taking a mirror from her bag, she bent curiously over it. The face that looked up into her inquiring one was called beautiful behind the glamour of the footlights. Now, in this uncompromising morning glow, its every defect stood brutally forth; the skin roughened by cosmetics, the hard, listless eyes, the tired lines about the mouth—bah! She threw open her window, leaned her elbows on the sill, and, resting her chin on her clasped hands, stared out upon the beautiful, lonely mountain sides, the lingering snow-drifts, the great evergreens towering against the vivid blue of the sky. How stainless a world compared with the

tawdry one in which she moved and had her being!

"Better than the rest of us?—better than the rest of us?" demanded the rhythmic wheels.

The voices of Derby Vaughan and the soubrette came back to her, raised indecorously in laughing badinage. She shuddered, yet she realized that in other moods she was herself as careless, as gay, as reckless of appearances.

The fresh wind roared in her ears. The sunshine on the melting drifts, the green of the forests, the blue of the sky smote her with desire. Something out there was calling her—something sweet and compelling. Should she resist it? Should she go on to spend the next week idling in San Francisco with Derby Vaughan and the De Voe Stock Company?

Down the western slopes of the Sierras wound the train, leaving winter behind it on the austere summits of the range. A fragrance of sun-warmed pines drifted in at her window. Blossoming orchards whirled by. The hill-sides were lavishly clothed with flowers. Spring!

The loveliness blurred behind an onrush of unaccustomed tears.

"You used to love the spring, Meribah—poor little Meribah!" she whispered.

Theresa trod buoyantly the street of a mountain village whose very name she did not know. Her blood leaped in wild joy through her arteries. Free! free! free! it sang.

She stopped at a little shop and bought crackers, cheese, a bottle of olives and a tin cup, slipping them into the small bag she carried.

"Where does this road go?" she asked the proprietor.

"Up to Seven Devils," he told her. "All-fired lonesome road—nothin' doin' fer twenty mile."

Outside his door she set her face up the highway whose loneliness was what she craved. Throwing back her shoulders, she filled her lungs again and again with the pure air of the hills.

For hours she swung along tirelessly, leaving behind her the last scattering ranches, passed or met by no other traveler. The road had become a mere wagon track through the forest. Her feet fell noiselessly on a thick carpet of pine needles.

Stopping for a moment to rest, she caught the gurgle of water below the road. Her high heels slipped as she scrambled down, and her gown caught and tore as she pushed through the chaparral thicket to a spring that gushed from the rocks over a bed of sand flecked with golden mica. Seated on the flat surface of a granite boulder, she ate her luncheon, dipping up the cold water in her tin cup and drinking deep. Gray squirrels ran down the trees to watch her, and a little red fox trotted past without noticing her intrusion.

On her mood of excitement followed one of weariness and reaction. She was very sleepy. Throwing herself on the ground, she pillowed her head on her arms and shut her eyes.

The hot, aromatic odor of tar weed filled the air with soporific sweetness. The water gurgled pleasantly past her. A breeze played light lullabies on the harp strings of the pines. Long sunbeams, slanting ever more and more redly between the columns of the trees, kept her warm and touched into pathetic beauty the unnatural gold of her hair. So she slept in the shadow of the everlasting hills—Theresa Bannister, second-rate actress, star of the De Voe Stock Company.

She sat up suddenly, blindly striking at something cold and moist that had touched her face. A beautiful greyhound stood looking at her with sad, friendly eyes. Seeing that she was awake, he lifted his nose heavenward and bayed mournfully.

"Please don't!" entreated Theresa. "Cheer up, do, and tell me what's the matter?"

The dog looked at her wistfully, then trotted away along the side of the mountain. She rose and followed him



H

"What do you want here?" he demanded. Then, "Oh, beg pardon! I didn't notice it was a lady."

until the rough trail ended abruptly. At her right rose the mountain; at her left brawled a noisy river; and in front of her stood a little shack, set like a child's toy at the foot of an enormous cedar. Theresa stopped short, but the hound looked back at her from the open door, wagging his tail imploringly, and she went on.

Twilight was falling, but she could make out in a corner of the hut the dim outlines of a man lying on a bunk. The dog was whining beside him, and

she saw a hand reach out to pat the brute's head.

"No, old boy—not dead yet!" The voice broke in a moan.

Theresa crossed the room and bent over him.

"What's the matter, friend?" she asked.

Dark eyes, hollow and feverish, stared up at her.

"What do you want here?" he demanded. Then, "Oh, beg pardon! I didn't notice it was a lady."

"You needn't apologize. You seem to be in bad shape."

"Been laid up with rheumatism for three days," he explained.

On a stool by his bunk she saw a half empty can of water and the crumbly remains of a loaf of bread.

"You poor boy! Wait; I'll fix you in no time! Shut your eyes," she commanded, smiling. "Your fairy god-mother has arrived!"

He obeyed with listless docility, and fell again into a troubled drowse.

When he opened his eyes the room was bright with the glow of the fire she had kindled. An iron kettle on the crane was singing merrily. On her knees before the fire, her face glowing, her hair golden in the soft light, knelt the stranger, toasting the fragments of his dry loaf.

"It would be better with butter," she apologized, "but you seem to be out of luxuries. I'll have some coffee for you in a minute."

Seated on the edge of his bunk, Theresa fed the sick man and held the hot cup to his lips.

"Now I'll make you more comfortable," she said, straightening the huddled blankets and rolling her jacket into a pillow for his head.

"Your hands are cold—let me chafe them," and he felt the warm touch of her fingers on his wrists.

"You are an angel," he murmured, drowsily, and fell asleep.

She filled her tin cup with coffee and drank it, sitting in the glow of the fire.

"An angel!" she mused. "You, T'res Bannister—you!"

She got up and walked restlessly about the room in the flickering red light. On the mantel, hobnobbing with samples of ore and variously labeled tin cans, she found a book or two—a table of logarithms, a ponderous volume on geology and, incongruously enough, a little old "McGuffey's Fifth Reader," thumbled and tattered. She opened it, turning the leaves with a thrill of childish reminiscence. Suddenly she started, and her hand shook the leaf at which she had stopped. Holding the page close to the fire, she stared at a

girl's name scribbled many times on the margin. Turning hastily back to the fly leaf, she found another, scrawled in the same boyish flourishes.

"Kent Farmer—are you Kent Farmer?" she whispered.

She stole to the bunk and looked down intently at the sleeper. She touched his dark head lightly, not meaning to waken him; but the jewel in one of her rings caught ever so gently in his hair and he opened his eyes.

"Suppose you tell me, now, who you are?" he suggested quietly. "It's no use pretending that I'm used to lady callers up here."

"I'm not a lady. I'm a second-rate actress who has run away for a lark. I meant to go back to the town to-night, but your dog—"

"I see. Jack brought you here, and humanity compelled you to stay. But now—really, I don't want to seem ungrateful—"

"I am miles from anywhere and the night is very dark."

"Yes, I suppose you must stay till daylight; but we'll hope no one will happen in. Your presence would be a little hard to explain."

"You're afraid the Seven Devils will gossip about you!" she laughed, scornfully.

"I was thinking of your good name."

She laughed again. "We won't worry about that—Kent Farmer!"

"Where did you learn my name?" he demanded.

She held up the book.

"And I found another name." Her voice softened involuntarily. "I, too, used to know a Meribah Lee."

"Not this Meribah Lee!" he cried, sharply. "Forgive me—you've been very kind, but you and Meribah Lee do not belong to the same world."

She looked at him, a flash of cruel mischief in her eyes, and opened her lips to speak.

But he was not listening. His eyes were fixed on the dark rafters overhead, and they were full of sadness.

Morning found Farmer free from

pain, but too weak to lift his head.
Theresa was brewing his coffee.

"Make it strong, please," he begged.

"Hire someone."

"Can't. I haven't a cent. Oh, it's
my own fault fast enough! Laramie



"Laramie," said Kent, "it's this brave little girl who has saved your claim and made my promise good."

"I'll need it, for I'm going to get up in an hour."

"You can't!"

"But I must!"

"Why?"

He told her how he had come up here to hold down a valuable mining claim for a friend, who had come perilously near allowing it to lapse for want of the required amount of work.

"This is Tuesday. Unless I can get in five days' work by the end of the week, the claim will be a goner. There are parties about who are lying low to jump it. It isn't as if it were my own. I've got to save it. Laramie trusted me to."

advanced me money for supplies, but as soon as I'd stocked up I went over to Seven Devils and blew in my balance at poker. Disgraceful, of course, but it doesn't help matters to repent now." He sank back wearily.

"What kind of work have you yet to do?"

He opened his eyes.

"I was finishing an extension of the water ditch when I had to quit. It's to carry water to run the air-compressing plant which——"

"I understand," she interrupted, impatiently, not understanding in the least, but catching at a familiar word. "The ditch—tell me about that."

He explained to her how deep it was to be and how wide, and how many cubic feet of water it would—

"Never mind the water. Tell me where you keep your tools."

"What for?"

"So I can dig your ditch."

"Nonsense!"

"Very good sense! I'm out of a job for a week, and ditch digging is as clean a profession as mine, I suppose."

"But I can't—"

"My dear boy, you can't help yourself. Tell me about those picks and shovels."

Still protesting, he told her.

As she left the shack she stripped off her rings and tossed them to him.

"Keep them for me, please," she said.

At noon, when Theresa came in, pale but game, with yellow clay staining her gray skirt, he held up one of the trinkets—a little green turquoise, set in a lovers' knot of gold wire.

"Where did you get it?" he asked.

She slipped the ring back on her finger. "It belonged to Meribah Lee."

"Yes—it was Meribah's." He looked at her for a long minute, searchingly.

At sunset, heavy with weariness, her hands blistered and raw, she threw aside her pick, bathed in the cold river and went back to the cabin.

"You are killing yourself!" he cried. "You shall not go near that infernal ditch again!"

But when the morrow came he found to his despair that he could not walk without her aid.

"And I am quite rested to-day," she insisted. She had slept on a heap of pine boughs by the fire. "Please don't worry about me. Can't you guess why I want to do this for you?"

"No."

"For Meribah's sake," she whispered, laying her hand for an instant on his. Then she was gone.

Two men, sauntering along the river valley, stopped to listen to the regular thud of a pick and to watch shovelfuls

of yellow dirt tossed up from the bottom of a slowly lengthening ditch.

"No show for us, Williams—he'll have it proved up by Saturday, all right;" and they turned back in the direction from which they had come.

Saturday night—and the claim was saved.

Kent Farnar was sitting up for the first time. Theresa had spread their supper on the little table.

After eating they sat side by side, staring silently at the fire.

"To-morrow," said Theresa, "I shall go. We play in San Francisco Monday."

He looked at her with unfathomable eyes.

"Before you go," he said, "may I tell you about Meribah?"

She nodded. "I thought you would."

"We went to school together, years ago, back in Illinois. I think I loved her from the first. She was so gay, so brave, so generous, so unspoiled."

"I lost track of her, but I've hoped and hoped that some day I should find her, and when I do—"

"You never will!" cried Theresa Bannister, a note of anguish in her voice. "She's dead, Kent Farnar—didn't you know that?"

"Hello within!" shouted a jovial voice outside. Jack leaped up, baying.

Farnar threw wide the door. "Come in, Laramie—glad to see you! Yes, everything's safe. See for yourself in the morning."

They had come close to the fire before the newcomer saw the woman who stood beside it, motionless, defiant, realizing at last how mad, how reckless of convention she had been.

"Laramie"—as Kent laid a hand tenderly on Theresa's shoulder, a dawning smile of pained contempt faded from his friend's lips—"Laramie, it's this brave little girl, not I, who has saved your claim and made my promise good. When I've told you all about it you'll admit that I'm a lucky dog in that I'm going to have such a wife as—Meribah Lee."

An Afternoon Tea

By Caroline Duer

MATHILDA came into the room brandishing a small, square card that she had just taken out of a small, square envelope.

"Look at that," she said. "One of us has got to go—so mamma says. *She* can't, because of her sprained ankle, and *I've* promised to automobile with Bob this afternoon."

As Bob shows every disposition to become my brother-in-law—he once had other—I will not say *higher*—ambitions, but that's all over and he is rapidly consoling himself—I saw directly that I was the person selected by fate and my sister to attend whatever entertainment the card indicated.

I took it from her hand. It was just an ordinary visiting card. "Mrs. Albert Tremont, No. — West — Street." And written across the top: "To meet Sir Charles and Lady Gleadenhall, on Tuesday, the 8th. Tea at five o'clock."

Thank fortune, the days of formal afternoon receptions, with their shut-up rooms, their gas-lighted and heated atmosphere, their rows of bouquet-laden, silk-attired débutantes courtesying at the entrance of each newcomer—thank fortune, these are things of the past! Some of us may choose to let it be known that we stay at home on certain days of the week; but the large gathering, the elaborate tea, the survival of the old-fashioned "kettledrum," is, in this city at least, almost extinct.

We are becoming much more simple in the daylight hours. We invite a few friends to meet a few friends, we scribble a few words on a few cards and send them off by post, tell the cook to make a few more cakes and sandwiches; we

come home from our drive or walk a little earlier than usual, and—well, that is all there is of it. Sometimes, of course, we do write "music" in the corner of the card, and we *have* music—some major or minor artist with a voice or a violin—but everybody is so tired in the middle of the season that it hardly even stimulates conversation.

On this particular "Tuesday, the 8th," however, the season had hardly begun. The weather had been unusually mild, and many people were staying late in the country. Mamma had pointed this out to Mathilda—and lamented the fact that Mrs. Tremont would probably be unable to find many people to meet the Gleadenhalls—when she urged her to attend the festivity. Mathilda promptly transferred the observations to me.

"There's practically nobody in town," she said. "And the Tremonts have always been so nice to us. One of us really ought to go. Sir Charles is a very distinguished old man, isn't he?"

"Yes, very," said I. I had heard his discoveries, geographical and botanical, greatly extolled by my father.

"Then he's sure to be a bore," remarked Mathilda, with all the frank crudeness of young American "smart" society. "Distinguished people mostly are. I don't envy you, and I'm sure you don't envy yourself."

Now, in my secret heart I do not find "men of mark," unless they are celebrated for good looks, or courage, or sport, or dare-devilness of some sort—in fact, for something rather romantic—particularly interesting. But I, at least, have the grace to be ashamed of myself.

"I consider it a privilege to be asked to meet people who are helping to make history," I loftily declared.

"That being so," returned Mathilda, "I will go and array myself to help make mine, with an untroubled conscience."

I also went away to dress. No matter how informal the entertainment, one does not care to attend anything but a hunt breakfast in a habit, which—as I had been exercising my horse in the riding club ring—was what I had on.

The amazing amplitude of the present fashion in skirts transformed me from a slim sylph into what mamma calls "a woman with a fine presence," and I swept the voluminous folds of my lilac cloth skirt up and down in front of the glass, and admired the grace of my long lilac coat with the comfortable conviction that I was exceedingly well dressed; and that the family, in objecting to the color as too delicate for a street gown, had entirely overlooked its becomingness.

A violet felt hat, bent into innumerable picturesque curves, and trimmed with rosettes of lilac and violet velvet, completed my costume. I sometimes have difficulty in finding hats to fit the shape of my hair—of course, my head itself is of no importance—but this one was a triumph. And the sight of it filled me with tender recollections, for in it—and other things besides—I had lost myself at the St. Louis Fair, and been obliged to accept assistance in finding my party—which took some time—from the handsomest, most well-bred and delightful stranger that ever came to the rescue of a distressed damsel.

I cherished his image, having been totally unable to catch his name, and wondered if fate had any particular little scheme in mind when she threw us together so fancifully. He was a thousand times better looking than Bob, for instance.

Mamma limped into the room while I was wondering whether I had looked as well on that occasion as I couldn't help thinking I did to-day, and hurried me off with the warning that it was

getting late and the carriage had been waiting for some time.

I don't know why it is that the people of the last generation are so particular about time, and not keeping other people waiting; I know it's polite and proper and all that, but I seem to spend my life being hurried to this place or that; and sometimes it seems as if nobody else in the world were punctual. I wouldn't be, myself, if it were not for mamma. She says it is ill-mannered to be late. But I declare I'd almost rather be ill-mannered than break my neck to arrive at a house five minutes before I was expected.

However, this time I was not unduly early, for I saw several carriages already standing about near Mrs. Tremont's "home."

(The papers, I notice, never let any well-to-do citizen live in a mere *house*. He or she always inhabits "a beautiful home.")

The tea was in full progress. Several women I knew were talking in the hall. Some of them were just going upstairs, and some had evidently just come down. Their feathers and furbelows bewildered the eye, and their voices smote the ear with high laughter and gay, broken sentences.

"Perfectly lovely, dear, where *did* you get it?" "Well, she's a perfect *robber*, but she *does* fit." "What, Helen Higgins engaged? My dear, I don't believe it. She was going into a nunnery, or a nursing sisterhood or something, the last time I heard of her." "Poor Mrs. Tremont, it's too bad to be giving a tea-party for Hamlet with the part of Hamlet left out." "Why, didn't you know—?" "No, they haven't come. The lions of the occasion are not here. The Gladenhalls haven't arrived." "Not in America?" "Oh, yes, they've been here a month or more, having banquets given to them by scientists and that sort of people"—a gentle tolerance for the class that thinks by the class that plays—"but they haven't turned up to-day."

At this point I joined in.

"Oh, I'm so sorry," I said. "I wanted to see Sir Charles. Didn't he discover

the source of some river somewhere? Or want to turn the power of the falls of the Zambesi to some account, as they did with Niagara?—and great vandals they were to do it, I think. Or find a new sort of deadly vegetable to make medicines out of?"

I had not listened to papa last night for nothing.

"Fancy knowing all that!" exclaimed one lively lady—whether alluding to my acquirements, or Sir Charles' discoveries, I did not know—and taking her carriage wrap from the footman, who, at an impatient wave of her hand, had awkwardly selected it from among several that lay on the long fire bench in the hall, she departed, laughing.

I made my way upstairs, surrendering my name to the butler on the landing, who, in his turn, introduced it to the attention of Mrs. Tremont, who did not hear it because she was at the moment artlessly engaged in looking out of the window, although the gathering dusk made it quite impossible to distinguish anything or anybody with any sort of accuracy.

There were two or three groups of people, a few men and a few more women, scattered here and there about the room, which was large and yet cozy-looking, with beautiful red damask walls that reflected the lamp and fire-light, and admirable arrangements of furniture and screen by which one found oneself invited to dialogue and protected from draughts in the most considerate way.

"Oh, my dear," cried Mrs. Tremont, when she at last became aware of my presence, "I believe those tiresome people have thrown me over, and here is Professor Addletope, and there's Mr. Trackless—quite a discoverer, too, in his way—and Mr. Earnest, who thinks he went to Oxford with Sir Charles years ago, and dear old Mrs. Marwig, who wants to ask them to dinner, as soon as she can, after meeting them—I always think her house is so interesting to strangers—and then I asked all the pretty young women I could, for I heard that Sir Charles Gleadenhall was very much of a gallant, and a great ad-

miration of beauty, and now no Sir Charles and no Lady Gleadenhall!

"I'm sure they would not be intentionally rude, for they really are nice people. Mabel Mannering"—that's Mrs. Tremont's niece, who married an Englishman and lives in London—"begged me to be civil to them. There must be some mistake; but it's after six now, and I can't expect these people to wait forever. I hope that if they are coming they won't be much later."

I hoped so, too, as I followed my hostess to the little tea table in the corner, for I was going to the theater that night and was dining early.

"I am told that poor Lady Gleadenhall is horribly shy," continued she, "and rather near-sighted, and quite indifferent as to how she looks. Isn't it strange what a curious taste prominent men have in wives?"

"She may have been pretty in her youth," said I, abstractedly, stirring my tea and wondering how soon civility would permit of my leaving.

Mr. Earnest, "who thought he had been to Oxford with Sir Charles," came to talk to me. He is a very respectable, elderly gentleman, but after we had exhausted the weather outside, and the pictures inside, and the plays that were likely to be performed that winter, we caught each other looking at the clock and laughed. Everybody else had been looking at the clock, too, when they thought they were unobserved, I dare say, but he and I had caught each other fairly in the very act.

"Do you suppose there is any use in waiting?" I asked him, confidentially. "I don't want to be impolite, but I can't stay much longer."

"No more can I," he returned, solemnly, as if his departure would reduce the very fire on Mrs. Tremont's hospitable hearth to ashes.

At this moment there was a stir, almost as if at the advent of royalty, and we saw Mrs. Tremont leave the people she had gone to talk with after giving me my tea, and approach the door.

"There they are," we exclaimed, Mr. Earnest and I, as one man.

But it was only the wife of the sec-

ond or third richest man in the city arriving a little later than was her custom.

I sat on for a few moments watching the door, and then slipped quietly up to my hostess and bade her good-by.

"Just tell Budget, as you pass him in the hall, that I want him," she murmured; "that's a dear girl. I think I had better have some one telephone to the hotel where they are staying, and that new little Irish footman I've got is a perfect goose."

I gave the order to Budget and descended to the front door, where the "perfect goose" let me out.

A light flurry of snow—the first of the season—had come up suddenly and as suddenly passed, leaving the sidewalk slippery. Carefully as I trod in my thin, buckled shoes, I could not help sliding, and an old woman in front of me plumped down almost on her shoulder blades in a way that must have jarred her considerably. I picked her up and set her on her feet, supporting her with my arm.

"I hope you are not seriously hurt," said I.

"Thank you, my dear, I can hardly be quite sure yet," she replied. "I am really a bit shaken. Would you mind standing beside me for a moment? I fancy I shall recover myself before long."

She had a most unmistakably English accent; she was near-sighted—goodness knows how she managed to keep on her eyeglasses after that fall!—and very badly dressed; it did not need a wizard's brain to divine who she might be. And when she plaintively continued: "Would you tell me? Is this not — Street? And is not that house No. — ?" I was perfectly sure.

"I am quite certain that we were asked to tea there, Sir Charles and I," she went on, "by a very civil person, a Mrs. Tremont, who was kind enough to send us a card some days ago. Sir Charles and my son were detained at the hotel by a tiresome bit of business just as we were starting, so I came on alone. But the footman refused to let me in. He said that Mrs. Tremont was engaged and could not see me. Very singular,

is it not? And I had dismissed my cab. You have just come from there, I fancy."

"This very moment," I answered; "and, indeed, Lady Gleadenhall——"

"Gl'e'd'all, we pronounce it, my dear," she suggested, kindly.

"Indeed, Lady Gledall!" I corrected myself hastily—"you are most anxiously waited for. Will you not come back with me? There has been some mistake, I'm sure."

"Why, if you really think so"—she hesitated.

"I am perfectly certain," I returned.

We retraced our steps with caution. The door flew open. The footman surveyed us with a surprise bordering on idiocy, and seemed about to make some murmured objection when I interposed.

"Take Lady Gleadenhall's cloak," I said, sharply, and he received that shapeless garment with staring eyes.

"Lady Gledall," Budget had announced, pompously—he knew how to pronounce it, if we ignorant Americans didn't—"and Miss Frelands," he had added, almost as if he found difficulty in suppressing the word "again."

And on the stairs I encountered Sir Charles, small, piercing-eyed, shriveled, and behind him—angels and ministers of grace!—who should be behind him but my friend of the St. Louis Fair!

I suddenly remembered a message from mamma to Mrs. Tremont. It seemed but right that I should return to give it. I did so. Lady Gleadenhall's son never took his eyes off me, nor stopped talking to me for a minute when he could help it. He is *ever* so much better looking than my brother-in-law that is to be.

Lady Gleadenhall has invited me to go out West with them in a private car that has been lent to Sir Charles.

Oh, by the way, the mystery of Lady Gleadenhall's exclusion from Mrs. Tremont's house is explained. Mrs. Tremont has an old pensioner by the name of *Gledell*, who frequently comes at inconvenient seasons. The "perfect goose" had been warned. If Budget had been at the door! But I'm glad Budget wasn't.

A Female Philanthropist

By Tom Masson

IT was early morning on upper Fifth Avenue. Down in the slums, that distant region of misery, those who had work to do had been up and away hours before.

Mrs. Bonder-Jones, however, who also had work to do, had only just risen.

Mrs. Bonder-Jones breakfasted in her room. Her husband came in and kissed her, on his way to Wall Street.

"Whither away to-day, my dear?" he said, cheerfully.

"Shopping," she replied. "I have a list of things that has been growing for a week or more."

Half an hour later, Mrs. Bonder-Jones, arrayed in her best morning bib and tucker, stepped into her carriage.

The first place that Mrs. Bonder-Jones stopped at was her dressmaker's.

Mrs. Bonder-Jones looked over velvets and silks, and with some deliberation and the precision of long experience, selected two gowns. One was two hundred and twenty-five dollars. The other, with Valenciennes lace, was eight hundred and fifty dollars.

Mrs. Bonder-Jones now hurried to her milliner's, only three blocks down. She bought four hats. One was forty dollars, the other fifty dollars, and two marked down were thirty-five dollars each.

The next place that Mrs. Bonder-Jones visited was that of a rug merchant.

When she saw the rug that the merchant had spread before her, Mrs. Bonder-Jones, for once in her life, felt a slight tinge of genuine enthusiasm.

Even at a thousand dollars it was cheap, and wise woman that she was,

she did not hesitate. The rug was purchased.

Mrs. Bonder-Jones then bowled away to a furniture dealer's, a decorator's, a caterer's, two large dry-goods establishments, a florist's, and then was about to give the order "Home," when she stopped short on the threshold of her carriage. Why, she had actually forgotten the Dumperton wedding present. And Alice Dumperton was her husband's own cousin.

So to her jeweler's drove Mrs. Bonder-Jones.

She saw several things that she thought might do for the Dumperton girl. Finally she hit on a pendant.

She hesitated for some time between two. One was two thousand two hundred dollars, and the other two thousand four hundred dollars. Wasn't the latter worth two hundred dollars more? Yes, it was! So Mrs. Bonder-Jones said it would do.

In her carriage, on the way home, Mrs. Bonder-Jones went over the list of things she had purchased. They amounted to something over six thousand dollars.

As she swept into the hall, a man, who had been waiting to see her, stepped up and bowed. He was dressed in the uniform of the Salvation Army.

"Madam," he said, politely, "could you give us something for Easter?"

Mrs. Bonder-Jones smiled. The fever of spending was still upon her.

"To be sure!" she said. "Hold your hand."

Opening a tiny gold purse, she gently shook the contents—seventy-nine cents—into his outstretched palms.

"There!" she said. "Take that. It's all the ready cash I have in the world."

Emblematic Negligées

By N. C. Keller

ALL the world (feminine) loves a *kim'-o-no*—accent on the *kim*! It is the ne-plus-ultra of ease, elegance and art in the realm of the negligee gown for womenkind.

Yet how many of the fair sex to whom its creature-comfort features appeal, realize the full significance of this symbolistic garment "writ o'er" with sentiment, emotion and poetry.

If, in the capricious glow of early April, the æsthetic, dark-haired maiden who has resided in Japan for several years, and who, in her distinctive Japanese boudoir, serves tea to her girl friends, in little, bow-like Japanese cups, should be found arrayed in a silken kimono on which palest cherry petals seem to have settled in wind-blown drifts, we may infer that she is fêting the great god Buddha's birthday—and, incidentally, perhaps, her own.

Or, should the gown chance to be of pale blue silk, lined with lavender, and embroidered with a design of iris blossoms—purple, yellow and white, with long, shaded green stems—as seen in the accompanying illustration, she should be the child of summer—if true to the Oriental significance.

Then, if one wishes to arrange a flower calendar of her own, after the customs of this land where the Sun Goddess lives—one by which she may abide in the appropriate selection of her kimonos, let it be as follows:

January: The pine and bamboo—friends of winter.

February: The plum blossom, called the "Eldest Brother of a Thousand Flowers"; because it is the first blossom

of spring. The tree itself signifies old age, the blossoms youth, and the buds babies. It indicates sweetness of nature. Each flower, too, has its kindred emblematical bird or beast; that of the plum blossom being the nightingale. It is held that even in the night this bird sings her sweetest songs to these blossoms, attracted thither by their fragrance. And though the snow falls on these spring children that the poet says "gleam like moonbeams through the dark night," they cling hardily to their stems through all the bitter month.

March: The peach blossom, that was once the favorite national flower.

April: The cherry blossom. Now the national flower, standing for honesty, politeness and an upright life; its kindred bird, the pheasant.

May: The peony, called "Flower of Prosperity." The peacock belongs with it.

June: The wistaria, with the cuckoo and swallow.

June and July: The iris, poetically termed by the Japanese "Sky amidst the Clouds" and "Boundless Sea," on account of its myriad iridescent shades.

August (and all through the summer): The lotus. This is the holy flower of the dead, never used at festivals. There are red and blue lotus flowers in India and in Egypt, but in Japan they are usually white; and the souls of the true and good rest upon them. The kingfisher and heron go with the lotus.

Late in October and early in November comes the chrysanthemum that stands for honor, and is the royal flower, as the crane is the royal bird of Japan.



By courtesy of A. A. Vantine & Company.

IRIS IS EMBLEMATIC OF SUMMER



By courtesy of A. A. Vantine & Company.

A MODERNIZED KIMONO

It was once the crest of a Chinese statesman who finally refused to serve the government because it had become too dishonest.

Everything in the imperial Japanese palace is decorated with the chrysanthemum. On the emperor's birthday he is toasted with *saké* in which this flower has been dipped:

"Let the emperor live forever! May he see the chrysanthemum cup go round autumn after autumn for a thousand years!"

They are termed "moon-touched blossoms" and "sleep of the hoary tiger," and are considered to resemble people, because no two are exactly the same.

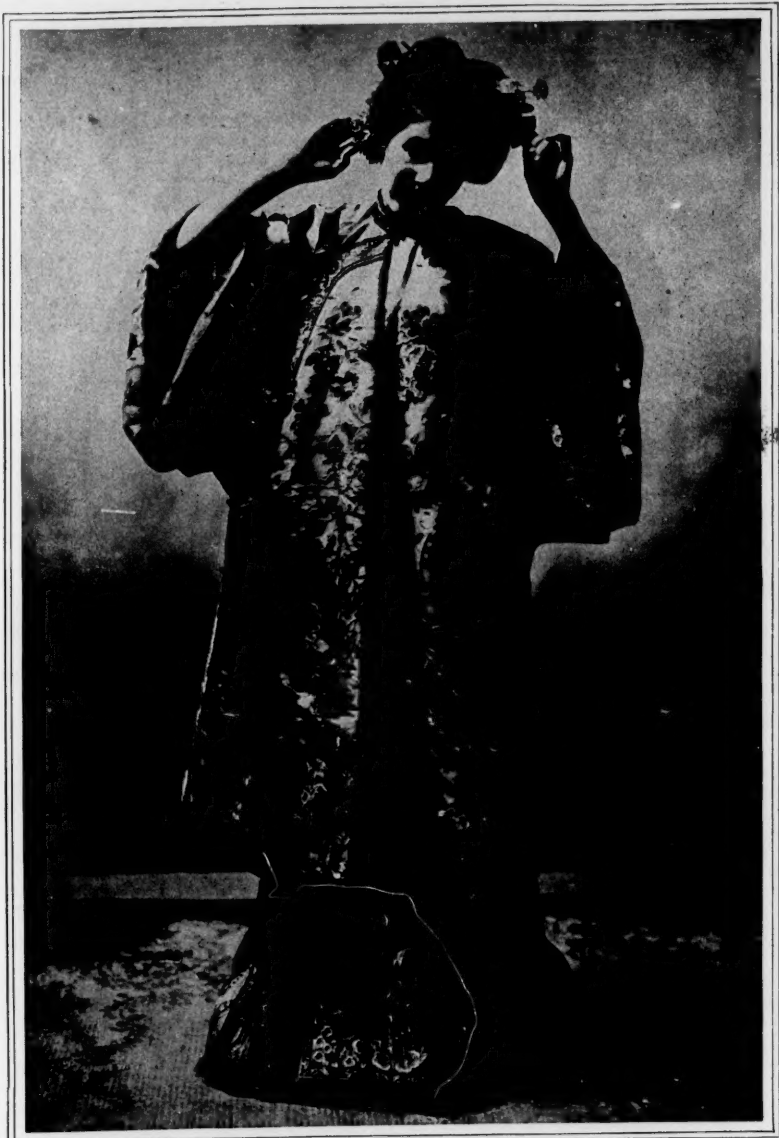
Ferns mean "hope." Bitter oranges signify "good luck."

Do not combine azaleas and camellias; they are deadly enemies.* The latter flowers fall whole from their stalks, instead of petal by petal, and are, therefore, unpleasantly suggestive of heads that have been severed by the guillotine.

The maple leaf conveys the sentiments of the dying year—in its autumn coloring, as it does with us.

All these designs figure conspicuously on Japanese kimonos, and are each emblematical, as conforming to some belief, superstition or poetic conception of these artistic people whose sun goddess, dwelling on the silvery top of their sacred mountain, Fujiyama, causes the flowers to blossom.

Huge scarlet fish swimming about in a pale blue sky, or gold lobsters meandering carelessly among multi-colored flower beds and a conglomerate mixture of lanterns, butterflies and insects,



By courtesy of A. A. Vantine & Company.

CHINESE MANDARIN COAT AND SKIRT

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By courtesy of A. A. Vantine & Company.

IRIS BLOSSOM DESIGN

furnish the *motif* for some of the fascinating antiques that, but for the perfect color scheme which fuses the parts into a harmonious whole, would result in a barbaric discord.

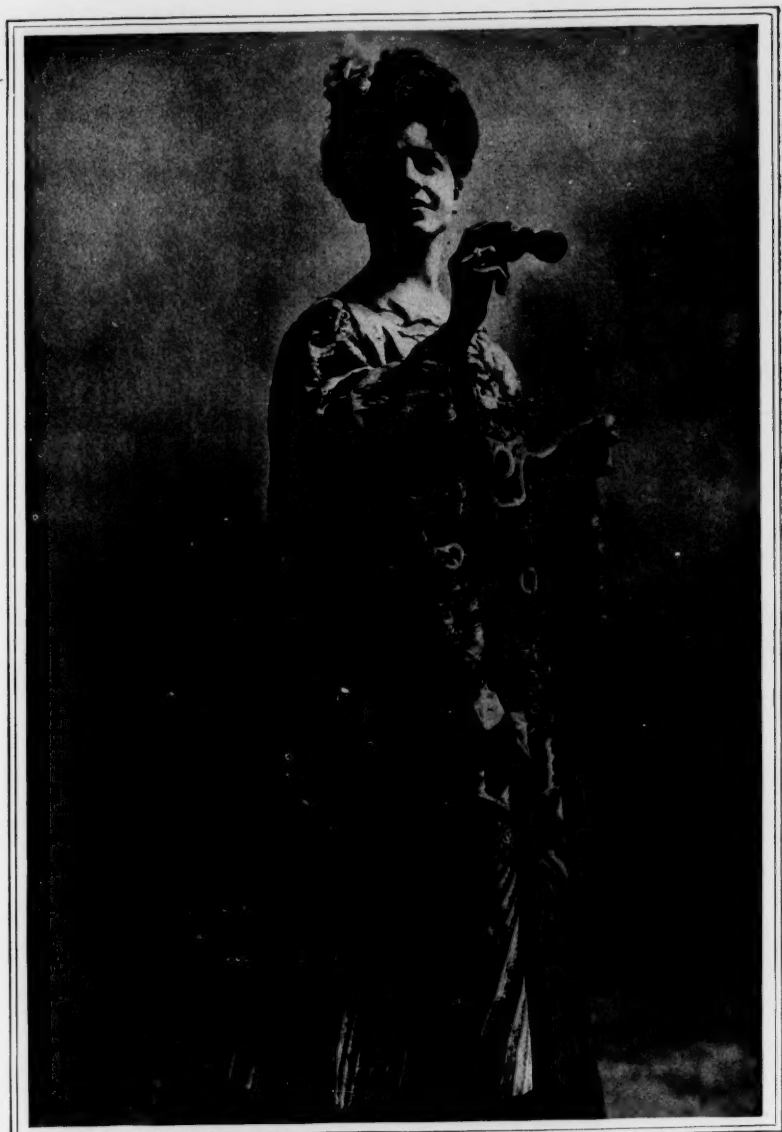
She who wishes to fashion for herself a kimono, more or less elaborate, may work out a dainty creation, embodying not only her artistic tastes, but her preferences—mental, soulful and figurative—along typical floral lines, or by decorative bird and beast.

She may cling to the national characteristics of the garment or she may modernize it, as is shown in the accompanying reproductions that illustrate some of the different methods of adopting the antique Chinese or Japanese kimonos to the purposes of opera coat, house gown or matinée jacket and skirt.

In this instance the transformation into a house gown is effected by the addition of a wide accordion-pleated flounce and ruffles, to a three-quarter Chinese mandarin coat.

The inventive genius of the American woman will suggest many other ways in which these garments can be utilized; availing herself of the embroideries of the petticoat for waist or trimmings of same, or as vests, cuffs and collars for somber cloth costumes or jackets.

It is quite possible to create a dainty facsimile of these foreign confections, if great care and good taste prevail in the selection of material and shades. Dainty crêpes and soft silk, in delicate shades, for the Japanese gowns, and satins in rich deep shades for the Chinese kimono.



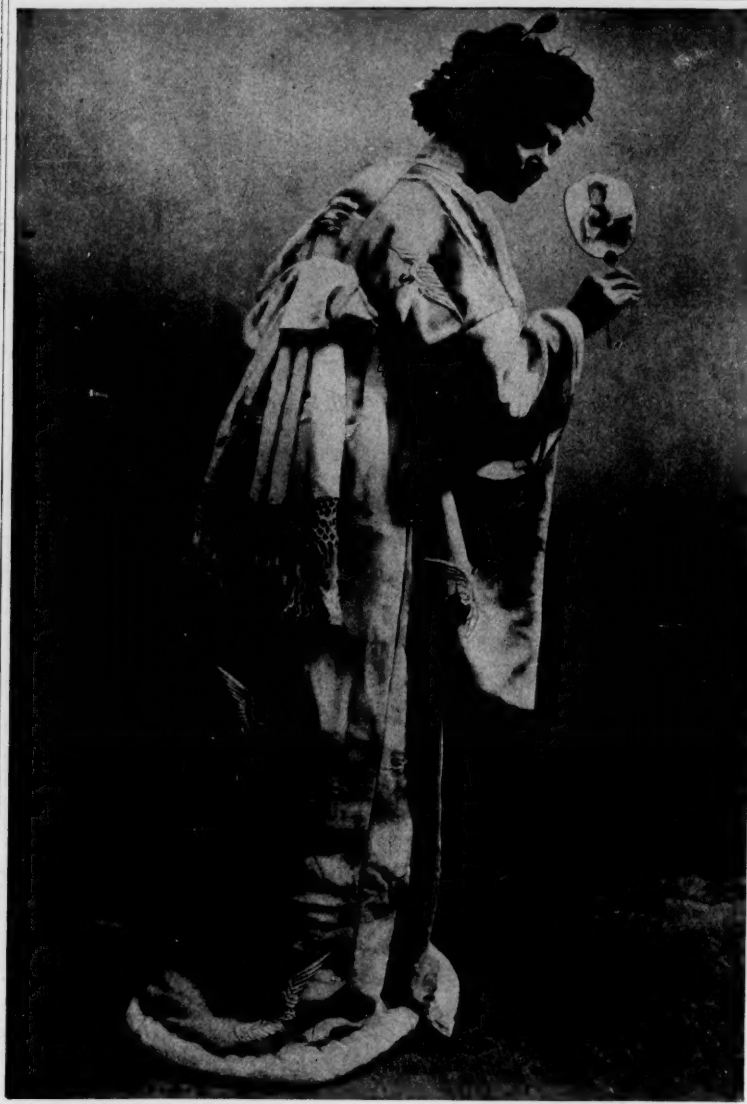
By courtesy of A. A. Vantine & Company

MAY BE CONVERTED INTO AN OPERA COAT

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By courtesy of A. A. Vantine & Company

OBI ARRANGEMENT FOR YOUNG GIRLS

Mid War's Alarms

STORIES OF THE BLUE
AND THE GRAY

By Cyrus Townsend Brady

Author of "For the Freedom of the Sea," "American Fights and Fighters," etc.

STORIES OF THE BLUE

I.—Mr. Sears Buys a Horse

(A Complete Story)

MR. JOHN SEARS was walking rapidly down one of the streets of Cairo—Illinois, not Egypt!—which led to the wharves on the water's edge. He had completed his errand, which was to lay some important papers before the military commander of the district, and so was in a great hurry to rejoin his ship. His attention was attracted by, what seemed to be, the familiar figure of a man in a blue uniform darting across the street some distance ahead of him and plunging into an alleyway. He quickened his pace, with an evident desire to overhail the man, who had got athwart his hawse—as a sailor would say—muttering to himself as he hurried along: "That looks like——"

He never finished the sentence, for, from out the same alleyway into which the blue-clad man had disappeared, there burst upon his vision another individual, a woman magnificently mounted upon a superb horse. She was going rapidly, and evidently desired to increase her pace, for she struck the horse a smart blow with her riding whip as she entered the street. The horse gave a sudden spring, and then something happened.

The saddle had not been properly girthed, for it began to turn. The girl strove to rein in the horse, but, with her shifting saddle, had no purchase by which to apply her strength. She screamed loudly, and in that instant Sears was by her side. She had dropped the reins and had caught the horse by the mane. He sprang to the bridle and grasped it so powerfully that he stopped the horse at once. Then, having spoken a few soothing words to the startled animal, he stretched out his left hand and assisted the woman to reach the ground. The saddle came clattering down with her. She stood by the horse white and trembling as she became conscious of the deadly peril she had so narrowly escaped.

"That was splendidly done, sir," she said, when she could command herself. "I owe you a great deal."

"It was a near thing for you, ma'am," he answered, simply.

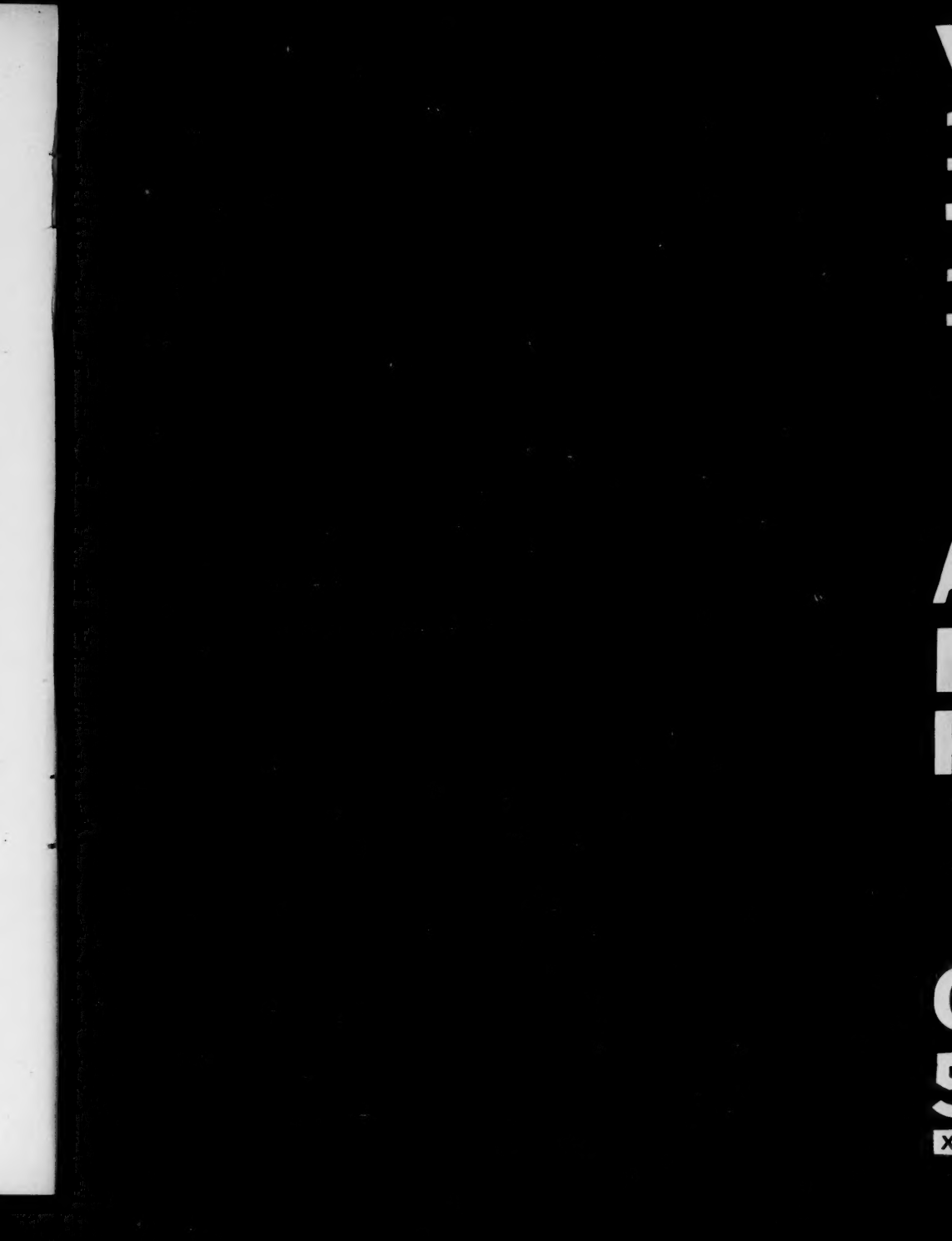
"Near!" she replied. "In another second I should have been under his heels. I had lost control of him. I couldn't get my foot out of the stirrup. I thank you more than I can say."

"Don't mention it. It was most fortunate that I happened to be here."

It was, indeed, fortunate for the woman, and Sears counted it equally



The current slowly swung the "Harrison's" broadside toward the battery, then the heavy guns rang out in union.



fortunate for himself, for he thought he had never looked upon so beautiful a girl.

"What do you wish to do now?" he said, breaking a pause which threatened to become awkward.

"If you can secure my saddle again, I must ride on. I am in a great hurry."

"So am I," answered the man, smiling at her eagerness. "If you will hold the horse, ma'am, I will look to the saddle. It's all right," he continued, after a brief inspection; "the girth wasn't properly tightened. I'll have it ready for you in a moment."

"You say you are in a great hurry also?" interrupted the girl, while he was busy with the saddle.

"Yes."

"Forgive me, sir, but are you—I am sure you must be—that is, you are not a Southern man?"

"I am attached to the Federal gunboat *Harrison*, yonder."

"Oh, I am so sorry——" began the girl, impulsively.

"Why?" asked the man directly, looking curiously at her.

"Well—er—er—because I am Southern, you see."

"That explains it. Your horse is ready. May I have the privilege?"

Seizing her in his arms, he literally lifted her from the ground into the saddle. It was a tremendous feat of strength, but in some way he felt on his mettle with this flower of the South, and was determined to show what he could do.

"That was splendid again!" said the girl, smiling. "How strong you are! I did not know that Northern men, especially sailors, knew so much about horses."

"I am no sailor," returned the man, shortly.

"Yet you belong to the gunboat."

"I do."

"Well, it is nothing to me. I only regret that there is no way in which I can show my gratitude. Good-by, sir, and thank you again."

She gave him her hand, which, as the most gallant Southern man might have done, he respectfully kissed.

"May I not know your name?" he asked.

She shook her head.

"Shall we not meet again?" he begged.

"I fear not. Good-by."

He stepped back instantly and raised his hat. She spoke to her horse, touched him with the whip and galloped off. He watched her until she turned the corner. Then, since he had lost so much time, he ran down the street until he reached the gunboat, where he found the flag officer on the upper deck fuming at his delay.

"I couldn't help it, sir," the young man reported, detailing the incident.

"Oh, you're always getting mixed up with women," remarked the older man, somewhat testily, giving the signal to cast off.

"By the way, sir," said the young man, his thoughts suddenly recurring to the man in blue, whom he thought he had recognized, "did anyone leave the boat this morning?"

"No one but you," answered his uncle, turning away.

"I must have been mistaken," thought Sears. "I wonder where that girl was going? South somewhere. She seemed in a great hurry."

Ten hours later the *Harrison* was slowly dropping down the narrow bayou.

The *Harrison* was an old river steamer—a side-wheeler—which had been altered into a man-of-war gunboat by building six-foot oak bulwarks around the guards, by dropping the boilers into the hold and by lowering the steam pipes as much as possible. She mounted six sixty-four-pounders in broadside, three on a side, and one thirty-two-pounder in the stern. With her sister ships, the *Lexington*, the *Tyler* and the *Conestoga*, she had been hastily made ready in 1861 for an attempt to open the Mississippi River.

From Columbus to New Orleans, on every point of land high enough to command the channel, which was otherwise fairly defensible, the Confederates had planted batteries. The first works of any importance below Cairo, which

was in the hands of the Federal troops, and was therefore the base from which the gunboat squadron operated, was on Halligan's Bluff.

While waiting for some of the combined movements of the army and navy which were projected, the flag officer determined to try out his gunboat in actual fighting, at the same time seeing if he could not eliminate the battery on Halligan's Bluff from future calculations. Three gunboats of his flotilla were busy elsewhere at the time. Two of them were scouting in the Ohio River. One had gone up the river to St. Louis, but was expected back on the night of the day the *Harrison* started out. The flag officer concluded not to wait for her. The gunboats had had no trial as yet against the forts, and no one knew what could be done with them.

The flag officer—albeit he was a veteran of over fifty years of sea service—was as daring as a boy. He had made up his mind to attack Halligan's Bluff at the first favorable opportunity. The favorable opportunity had come. Just north of the bluff there was a large but thickly wooded island cut off from the mainland by a narrow, twisting bayou. In ordinary weather the water in this bayou was very shallow and navigation was not possible, especially for a boat the size of the *Harrison*. The river happened, however, to be at a very high stage. The flag officer consulted with his pilot and decided to try the bayou. If he could work through it, he could gain a position on the flank of the fort, and, by means of his guns, could, as he phrased it, "rake the works fore and aft, and clear the decks of the enemy."

In spite of the high water, however, the pilot had demurred to the attempt, but the flag officer had assumed all responsibility and insisted. It would have been better to approach the works at night, but the pilot declared that it would be absolutely impossible to take the *Harrison* through the tortuous bayou unless he had plenty of light. Unless the Confederates kept very negligent watch, they would certainly learn of the approach of the gunboat. Whether they could do so in time to

make provision for her arrival was a thing that could only be determined by trying.

So five o'clock in the evening found the *Harrison* slowly ramming her way through the overhanging undergrowth or sliding over the bars of the bayou. Up in the pilot house ahead were the pilot, the flag officer and young Sears, the flag officer's private secretary or clerk. Sears was no sailor. At least, he was not a naval officer. He happened to be the flag officer's nephew, and, as he was alone in the world and possessed of a considerable fortune, he had enjoyed plenty of liberty to go cruising all over the globe with his uncle.

At the outbreak of the war he had refused a commission in the volunteer navy, having no liking for its restraints, and had chosen to accompany the flag officer in the nondescript capacity of clerk or secretary when he was ordered to service in the Mississippi. The slow beat of the *Harrison's* engines was plainly audible all over the island and the adjacent shore.

"I've no doubt," said the flag officer, reflectively, "that they know we're coming."

"Yes, sir," answered the young man, who was very punctilious in public, and was always most careful never to presume on his relationship save in the privacy of his uncle's cabin, "they certainly must, unless they're deaf."

"P'raps they won't be lookin' for us," put in the pilot.

"Unless they are fools as well as deaf," returned the flag officer, "they will have a dozen scouts out watching us, and our every movement will have been reported."

"No hope for a surprise, then, sir?" asked the clerk.

"I don't know about that. Unless they have previously made provision for an attack from this direction, it's hardly likely they'll have time to do it with the short warning we have given them. We've been less than two hours in the bayou."

"By the Mark Twain!" sang out the leadsmen forward.

"There isn't much water between the bottom of the boat and the bed of the river, eh, pilot?"

"Not much, cap," said the pilot, grimly, throwing the head of the gunboat over to starboard and jamming her so close under the bank that the overhanging tree branches swept the guards. "We'll be 'round the last bend in a few minutes. Yonder it lays," continued the old river man, pointing ahead. "If you're goin' to do-somethin' with them guns of your'n, you'd better git 'em ready fer shootin'."

The pilot was full of the independence of his trade and profession. He cared not a whit for naval officers of whatsoever rank. The flag officer stepped out of the pilot house, descended to what the sailors on the boat called the "gun-deck," and spoke with his first lieutenant. Everything was ready. The men were at quarters, the guns were cast loose and provided. All was ship-shape below. Presently he rejoined the other two in the pilot house.

"Round that turn does it," said the pilot, deftly swinging clear of a threatening snag.

"Very good," said the flag officer. "We're quite ready."

"The bayou opens out a leetle thar," continued the pilot, "an' unless the wash of the waters has changed the channel, I reckon you kin swing your port side so as to bring all them guns to b'ar."

"We'll give 'em a broadside," said the flag officer, "so soon as we have a chance."

"All ready now, then," said the pilot, reversing the wheel rapidly and swinging the head of the gunboat to starboard.

As he did so the *Harrison* rounded the last bend, and suddenly found herself in a stretch of comparatively open water, ending, perhaps, a quarter of a mile away, in the tawny flood of the Mississippi. Before her were the earthworks covering a heavy battery. Above them floated the Confederate flag. Sure enough, however, there was no protection on the side which the *Harrison* had reached. By giving her guns their high-

est elevation they easily bore. What current there was in the sluggish estuary was swinging past the bluff into the Mississippi. The flag officer caught hold of a rope. Bells jangled sharply below. The engines stopped. He leaned out of the pilot house and called out a quick command. An anchor was dropped from the aftermost end of the boat. She stopped. The current slowly swung her broadside toward the battery.

"We've got 'em now!" cried the flag officer. "Aim carefully, men. Fire!"

The heavy guns of the gunboat rang out in unison. The vessel shook with the suddenness of the concussion. The veteran men-o-war's men in the gunboat made good practice. One shot smashed the flagstaff. Another dismounted one of the guns of the battery. A third sent a shell which exploded around one of the gun crews. The Confederates scampered away like rabbits.

"This is a fine maneuver of yours, sir," said young Sears, gleefully; "you've got 'em just where you want them. They can make no reply."

"I ain't so sure 'bout that," interrupted the pilot, warningly; "look yonder."

He pointed to the opposite bank. There was a movement in the undergrowth; a filtering ray of sunlight through the leaves gleamed on steel.

"There's something there, I'll——"

Crash!

The shore not a hundred yards away was shrouded in smoke and shot with fire.

"A masked battery!" cried Sears.

"Field pieces! Army guns!" exclaimed the flag officer, as he heard the shot ripping through the thin oak planking of the gunboat.

"Never mind the fort, men," he cried; "we must attend to those fellows first."

The seamen had been loading the great guns with the rapidity of veterans. The breeches were elevated, the muzzles depressed, and three sixty-four-pound shells exploded in the vicinity of the masked battery on the river edge. The distance was short, the aim perfect.

The noise of the exploding shells was succeeded by shrieks and curses, and then one solitary gun from the shore sped a shot which, luckily for the Confederates, tore through the wooden bulkhead of the gunboat and exploded the port boiler. A half score of men were badly scalded, and the *Harrison* was rendered helpless in an instant—helpless, that is, for advance or retreat. Her guns still bore. Another broadside completely demolished the battery, now plainly visible from the gaps in the trees that had been made by the exploding shells. The slaughter among the Confederate gunners was fearful.

Back of the gunboat, however, there was a low promontory of land. Guns placed there could fire on the *Harrison* without being in danger of a return. So long as matters remained in *statu quo* the *Harrison* was safe. She had nothing to fear from the fort—an occasional shot would keep it clear of its garrison—nor had she anything to fear from the battery, for all its guns had been put out of action. If the Confederates could bring up any more field guns—and there were plenty of them at Columbus—and place them in that position, the gunboat would have to surrender or be sunk at her moorings. The flag officer thought quickly.

"Mr. Sears," he said to his secretary, "we are helpless, you see. We can't get away. If the enemy plants a battery on that point off our quarter we'll have to strike flag or sink. The *Lexington* ought to be back in Cairo by this time. And there's a big army tug there, the *Canonicus*. I must get word somehow or other to the gunboat and the tug to come down and pull us out."

"Yes, sir, I'll go at once."

"Ay, but how?"

"Put me ashore yonder and I'll steal a horse somewhere and get up to Cairo somehow. The road is direct enough, and cuts off the bends of the river."

"The woods are full of Rebs, I don't doubt."

"I can't help that, sir," answered the young man. "Besides, it will be dark in a short time."

"All right," said the flag officer; "get

yourself ready and then report to me in my cabin."

When Sears tapped on the door of the flag officer's cabin and was bidden to enter, his uncle handed him a sealed paper.

"Here are orders for the gunboat and the tug to come down and extricate us."

"Very good, sir."

"Tell the captain of the *Lexington*, or whoever is up there, that he'll have to come through the bayou. I don't want to risk the gunboat through the channel under the guns of the battery on the bluff. I want you to make haste now. That's all. Now, Jack," continued the old man, dropping his command manner and reaching out his hand to his young nephew, of whom he was very fond, "it's a dangerous cruise you've got before you, and everything depends upon you. You must get through and bring the boats to our rescue, but don't get reckless."

"I won't, Uncle John," said Sears, shaking the flag officer's hand. "I want a boat to put me ashore on the other side. It's quite dark now, and I don't believe there are any Rebels in the woods yonder."

"No, I guess we've cleared them out there. Very well. Tell Mr. Darling—the first lieutenant—to put you ashore. Good-by."

"Good-by, sir."

Five minutes after Mr. Sears stepped out of the boat on the mainland opposite the island. The men had rowed up the bayou with the utmost caution. The oars had been muffled, and Sears did not believe he had been observed in the darkness. Requesting the midshipman in charge of the boat to remain under the lee of the bank for a short time, until he saw how the land lay, Sears scrambled up the bluff and found himself on the land. Sure enough, as he had expected, before him ran a highway. It was very dark under the trees now, although it was lighter in the open road. He stood listening a moment, peering into the gloom. Presently he heard the slow footfalls of horses. He slunk back into the shadow of the underbrush, drew his revolver and waited breathless.

The horses were coming down the road at a slow walk. The riders stopped within a few feet of him.

"Miss Edith," said a man, "you know all depends upon you."

"I know," answered another and softer voice. It seemed very familiar to the listener, but he could not quite place it.

"I've got no officer left to send for a battery. My men are so demoralized by the fire of that Yankee gunboat, which has wrecked all our guns, that I don't dare trust any of them."

"I volunteered," returned the woman, quickly, even eagerly. "I am anxious to go."

"Very well. You know you are to tell Colonel Chillingport, at Columbus, that we've got a Yankee gunboat stranded and helpless out here in the bayou, and if he can send down a battery to take the place of mine, we can sink her or make her surrender. It must be done quickly, though."

"I shall not spare my horse," answered the girl.

"I hate to let you go alone, Miss Edith, but I don't dare leave——"

"It's all right. We're all for the South here. No one will hurt me. I am anxious to go, to render any service to our beloved country."

"All right, then. Good-by."

Just then a shot from the distant gunboat thundered through the forest.

"They're at it again! I must go," said the officer, wheeling his horse and galloping back toward the place where the remnants of his men lay concealed.

The woman hesitated not a moment; she lifted her head, gathered up the reins and spoke to the horse. Before he could move, however, a hand grasped the bridle and checked him.

"Who is it?" asked the woman, a sudden note of alarm in her voice.

"I shall have to ask you to come down from that horse," commanded Mr. Sears, quickly but politely.

For answer the woman lifted her riding whip and struck vigorously at him. He threw up his right hand. His left still retained the bridle of the rearing, plunging, frightened horse. The whip struck his forearm. The next instant

the woman was conscious of the barrel of a pistol thrust within a short distance of her face as she bent forward over the horse.

"I don't want to hurt you, but if you make a sound I'll have to fire! Drop that whip!"

She hesitated for a second, then the whip fell to the ground.

"Now, then, please dismount."

The man's voice was imperative, although his words were polite enough. The hand that held the revolver did not tremble. The woman realized that her captor meant business. Disengaging her feet from the stirrups, she slipped to the ground.

"Face toward the river bank," ordered the man. "Now march forward."

"What are you going to do with me, sir?" asked the woman.

"Nothing. I wouldn't harm a hair of your head."

"Then I'll scream," said the prisoner, promptly, suiting the action to the word, and shrieking out "Help! help!" in a shrill, high-pitched feminine voice.

Just as she did so there was another shot from the *Harrison*. The flag officer was keeping the Rebels awake by firing one of her guns alternately at the battery and the fort every two minutes during the night. The sound of her cry was drowned by the roar of the gun, yet her scream met with a quick but unexpected response. There was a crashing in the underbrush of the river bank before him, and two persons, a young boy and a sailor, scrambled up the bluff.

"Is that you, Edgerly?" asked Sears.

"Yes, sir," answered the midshipman. "What's up?"

"I've captured a horse and a woman. The woman you will take to the gunboat and keep until I return."

"Sir," protested the woman, "do you mean to make me a prisoner?"

"I don't mean to let you carry any message to Colonel Chillingport, at Columbus, which will result in the loss of this gunboat," answered Sears, coolly. "No harm is intended you. You will be perfectly safe if you keep quiet. I

pledge you my word of honor that the flag officer will release you when I get back."

"I won't go!" said the woman, stubbornly.

"And don't speak so loud or I'll have to order you gagged, which I should regret," went on Mr. Sears, quickly. "Now, go."

"I won't, I tell you!"

"You'll have to go, if we have to carry you, madam," said the young midshipman, sharply.

"You're a brute!" choked the woman, turning away.

"Very good. See that she doesn't get away, Edgerly."

"All right, sir," answered the midshipman. "This way, ma'am."

Sears waited until the boat shoved off. Then he turned to the horse, unbuckled the saddle, laid it aside in the underbrush and sprang on the horse bareback. He could ride anything in any guise. He struck up the river road, which he knew would lead him to Cairo, some twenty miles away. The horse was a thoroughbred, perfectly fresh, and carried his new rider forward at a great pace. Sears did not spare him. There were too many dangerous possibilities hanging on his action to permit of a moment's delay for any cause. He sped the gallant horse up the road at a terrific gallop.

A mile or so from the outskirts of Cairo he ran into a raiding detachment of Confederate scouts, but broke through it without difficulty. Although they sent several shots after him in the dark, he was untouched; not so the horse. Just as he entered Cairo, about ten o'clock at night, the brave animal, which had been going more slowly, in spite of the urging of his rider, faltered, staggered and fell. In the dash through the Confederate cavalry, he had been shot; and this was the end of him. Sears waited a few moments until he saw that the horse was dying, and then, with a pang of regret, picked up his sword and ran through the streets.

By great good fortune, just as he reached the wharf, the *Lexington* was swinging into her landing place. She

had arrived just in time. He hailed her and was at once taken aboard. Fortunately the *Canonicus*, the army tug, had steam up, and both vessels were soon plunging down the river at their very best speed.

Sears, as has been said, was a rich man. He always kept a considerable supply of money by him, and preferred gold. As soon as he had delivered his orders and made his report to the *Lexington* and the tug, and they were on their way to the rescue of the *Harrison*, Sears went down to the engine room and busied himself with some strange metallurgical experiments. On account of the bend of the river, the distance from Cairo was much greater than by the road. It was two o'clock in the morning before the two boats, whose speed was not great at best, and which had to proceed with caution on account of the night, reached the other end of the bayou.

As the moon had just risen, the pilot of the *Lexington* concluded that he could carry the boat through the bayou by moonlight. It was four, and the day was just dawning when the *Lexington* rounded the last bend and hailed the *Harrison*. Sears, who was in the pilot house, was greatly relieved when he saw the flag officer's gunboat just as he had left it. Close behind the *Lexington* came the powerful army tug.

"I suppose you want us to get you out right away, sir?" asked the captain of the *Lexington*, hailing the flag officer standing abaft the pilot house.

"Not quite. We must finish that fort before we leave."

"Good!" exclaimed the captain of the *Lexington*, delighted at the opportunity for real war.

"Just drop down ahead of us, please, and we'll both open fire on them," continued the flag officer. "Tell the tug yonder to come alongside and make fast."

"Shall I send you aboard the *Harrison*, Mr. Sears?" asked the captain of the *Lexington*, after he hailed the tug transmitting the flag officer's orders.

"It won't be necessary," answered the clerk. "You'll have to pass very close

to her in these narrow waters, and I think I can jump aboard."

The maneuver was entirely practicable, and presently the young man reported to his uncle.

"You have a prisoner of mine aboard, sir, I believe."

"Ah," said the flag officer, "she's below in my cabin, and a madder woman I never saw, or a prettier, you young dog."

"I give you my word of honor, sir, that I didn't know whether she was white or black."

"Well, go below and look after her. I shan't need you any more."

"Thank you, sir," cried Sears, delighted with the prospect.

He knocked softly at the cabin door, and, receiving no answer, finally walked in. On a chair before the table sat a young woman, her face buried in her hands.

"I beg your pardon, madam——"

"Who are you, sir?" said the woman, lifting her head.

She was pale and haggard from loss of sleep and from mental anxiety, but Sears recognized her at once, and again he thought he had never seen so beautiful a woman. As her eyes fell full upon him, a startled exclamation burst from her lips.

"Why, you are the gentleman who saved me yesterday morning!" she cried.

"Yes," he answered, readily, "and who had the honor—or the misfortune—to be your captor of last night."

"The latter act cancels the first, sir."

Just then the guns of the *Harrison* banged away. They were followed a few seconds after by those of the *Lexington*.

"What is that?" cried the girl, starting to her feet.

"I'm afraid that's the end of the works of your friends on the bluff yonder."

"You cowards!" exclaimed the woman, "to get into a position from which you cannot be shot at and blow up the poor, helpless gunners!"

"But if I remember aright," said

Sears, mildly, "you were going to bring a battery to do just that thing for us."

"That's different."

Mr. Sears laughed. Again the broadside cut loose.

"Where is my horse?" asked the girl, impulsively.

"I am sorry to say that he was shot."

"That was a needless bit of malice on your part," returned the prisoner. "Couldn't you have used him without killing him?"

"Your friends did it. I ran into a Confederate scouting party and they fired at me, missed me, but killed your horse."

"What a pity!"

"That they missed me or that they hit the horse?"

"Both. One Confederate horse is worth a dozen Yankees."

"Thank you," said Sears, detecting a glimmer of a smile on the girl's face.

"Beg pardon, sir," said Mr. Edgerly, sticking his head into the cabin, "but the flag officer says the fort is silenced, and he's sending a shore party to spike the guns. If you want to see it you'd better get up on deck."

"Will you come also?" asked Mr. Sears, politely, of the young woman.

"I have no desire to witness the discomfiture of my brave countrymen," she replied, haughtily.

"You will excuse me, then?"

"With pleasure."

Covered by the gun fire of the *Harrison*, a party of men from the *Lexington* had manned the boats and were rowing to the shore. The works on the bluff were utterly untenable. The Confederates had finally abandoned them after the first broadsides. They had rallied in the trees back of the fort, however, and opened fire upon the shore party. A few well-placed shots from the *Lexington* drove them to further cover, and the shore party spiked the guns and returned to their boats without molestation. The flag officer had not forgotten the possibilities of offense in the remains of the field battery; for, at intervals, just on the venture, the aftermost broadside gun of the *Harrison* sped a random shell through the woods. The

powerful tug was by this time fastened to the *Harrison*.

"So long as we have put that fort out of action," said the flag officer, "there's no reason why we can't drop down the river and get back to Cairo on the outside of the island, instead of trusting this bayou. Signal the *Lexington* to come alongside, and give us a line so soon as we get out into the main stream," he continued, addressing Mr. Darling. "Then weigh anchor and get under way. The tug can take us that far with the current easily."

"That prisoner, sir," interrupted the clerk. "I said that she should go free—"

"Oh, very well," said the flag officer. "We'll put her ashore before we leave the bayou. Go and tell her so. I don't want to load the boat with women folk."

"Miss—pardon me, I do not know your name—" said Sears, as he once more approached the girl in the cabin.

"It isn't necessary that you should."

"Quite so. I gave you my word of honor that I would not hold you prisoner, so, with the flag officer's permission, I am going to put you ashore."

"Thank you. That doesn't give me back my horse, however."

"No, it does not. But I am prepared, having expended him in the service of the country, to pay for him."

"Do you think I would touch Federal greenbacks?"

"I intend to pay you in gold."

"It's the same thing. Do you think I would handle money that bears the eagle of the United States upon it?"

"I believed that you would urge just such a foolish objection as that, so I melted one hundred and fifty dollars in gold down into little ingots while on board the *Lexington* last night. Here it is."

He drew from his pocket a number of little, irregular slabs of the precious metal.

"I don't know why," said the girl, slowly, "I should not accept the money. You had no right to my horse. This will mean much for the poor fellows in our army. I will take it."

"You honor me," said Mr. Sears, politely.

"I don't do it for that. It is despoiling the enemy."

"The boat's ready, sir," said Edgerly, again interrupting, "and the flag officer says for you to bear a hand. He wants to get out of this and away."

"Allow me," said the young man, extending his hand.

"I can go myself, thank you," returned the girl, drawing herself up scornfully. She followed him out of the cabin to the gangway, where she entered the boat without assistance.

He took his place in the stern sheets by her side, and in a few moments stopped the cutter near the bank where he had captured her the night before.

"I presume this place will be as suitable a landing place as any for you?"

"As well as any other."

"I am very sorry about the horse."

"You paid for it. Do not apologize further."

"I shall not, then. I hope this won't be our last meeting."

"Your hopes differ from mine," answered the girl, sharply.

During this little colloquy Sears had been scanning the shore. He purposely stopped the boat where the water was shallow, so that there was, perhaps, a space of five feet of muddy water before the bank was reached. The prow of the boat slid softly up into the mud.

"I shall have to assist you here, whether you like it or not," he said, rising to his feet, as the girl looked with dismay at the muddy water between her and the shore. He stepped overboard recklessly, and, before she could interpose an objection, seized her in his arms and lightly carried her to the shore.

"I believe you landed me here purposely, you odious Yankee," she exclaimed, indignantly, as he set her down on dry ground.

"I certainly did," he answered, laughing lightly. "Good-by, Miss—Edith. I shall try to see you again."

She waited until she felt safe from recapture, and then called after him triumphantly:

"I did it! I told them you were coming."

"I thought so," answered Sears.

She turned her back on him without another word. Nor did she look back, although she was dying to do so, until the boat had rounded the bend in pursuit of the already moving gunboats.

"And so you killed the girl's horse?" commented the old flag officer, after hearing a detailed account of his nephew's adventures.

"Yes, sir, but I paid for it before I put her ashore."

"Humph! How much?"

"A hundred and fifty, Uncle John."

"What! Of course, you know the government won't repay you?"

"I don't want repayment."

"Well, you paid dear for your fun, I think."

"Oh, I don't know about that. She was a mighty pretty girl," said Sears, gravely. "I intend to see her again."

STORIES OF THE GRAY

I.—SECESSION AND SEPARATION

(A Complete Story)

IT had come at last. The long debated ordinance of secession had been passed, the governor had approved it, and it had been duly promulgated amid the ringing of bells, the firing of cannon, and the shouts of the unthinking populace. Virginia, mother of Presidents, chief among the great commonwealths which had made the American republic, had gone out of the Union. For weal or for woe she had taken her stand. She had devoted herself to the cause of her seven Southern sisters which, in rapid succession, beginning with South Carolina, had seceded from the original aggregation, and had banded themselves together as the Confederate States of America.

The South had been waiting and hoping. To many Southerners it seemed that the momentous action of that April day settled the question of their future. The North might have been fought before with good hope of success, but with Virginia, wealthy and populous, with all the prestige of its past, on the side of the South, the ultimate triumph of the South was assured; the independence of the Confederacy was certain, especially as her action gave the keynote to three other remaining Southern States, which, shortly thereafter, followed Virginia's example.

Not every Virginian shared in the general rejoicing over the drastic solution of continuity thus effected, how-

ever. Some there were of her best citizenship who went with their State with a sadness which no popular enthusiasm could dissipate or even diminish. Some there were—and these among the greatest of her children—who had borne the commission of the United States in the army or navy, who had loved its service, who had revered and honored its flag. These realized clearly that the ultimate result of their choice was armed opposition to a government to which in their boyhood they had sworn allegiance, and they bitterly regretted the stern necessities of their course.

The wiser heads—always in the hopeless minority—recognized that the differences of opinion as to the powers and prerogatives of the States with reference to those of the central government, which, with slavery as an inciting cause, had brought about the conflict, could eventually be settled in but one way; and that not until the dread arbitrament of the sword had been rendered would the cause be finally determined.

Yet most of the people were not unwilling to secede. Many of these balanced the claim of Nation against State and, from the sternest and loftiest conception of duty, concluded that the balance of right was with the smaller territory, the unit rather than the aggregate.

The voice of the few had been against

secession. When it was accomplished, however, they accepted it, hesitatingly in some instances, but almost universally. A little handful of men, scattered in different sections, did not acquiesce in the determination of the majority. As there were Copperheads in the North, so there were Union men in the South. The man who renounced his allegiance, the soldier or sailor, for instance, who had been bred to the profession of arms, gave up much; but the few who, in spite of overwhelming force of public opinion, refused to be swayed by the almost unanimous voice of the people and declared themselves unflinchingly for the Union and against secession, even after it had become a settled fact—these suffered more than any class of citizens within the Union.

Such a man was Colonel Richard Trent. This veteran soldier and gentleman owned a large plantation on the east slope of the Blue Ridge Mountains, which lay to the westward of the Shenandoah Valley. He was a widower with one daughter and two sons.

Rosalie Trent was eighteen years old when Virginia went out of the Union. Her brother, Richard, was twenty-two; her younger brother, Tom, fourteen. Colonel Trent was an invalid. He had been a volunteer soldier in the Mexican war, where he had highly distinguished himself, had been wounded there, and had never recovered completely from the injury. He was an enthusiastic horseman, and shortly before the outbreak of the Civil War had been thrown from his horse, a thing which never would have happened had it not been for the disabling wound, which had made riding a dangerous pastime. This accident left him a more or less helpless cripple.

He was a stern, hot-tempered autocrat in his family and in society—as determined as he was brave, as obstinate as he was high-spirited. His elder son, Richard, possessed much of his father's temper, and chafed under the restraints which the old man sought to impose upon him. Relations between them were often more or less strained, but there had as yet been no open rupture.

The younger son was a merry, jolly little boy, very much in awe of his father. Rosalie adored the old colonel, and, in turn, her father's heart was set upon her as it was upon no other being.

Many had been the discussions in the little family over the great question of the hour, discussions usually one-sided, since Colonel Trent did most of the talking therein, no one, except Richard, venturing to cross him in debate. It developed, however, that young Richard Trent was for secession and the Confederacy heart and soul. To Thomas it was merely a matter of vivid excitement and deep interest. He had as yet no particular convictions concerning the matter. Rosalie Trent sided with her elder brother in her heart, but tenderness and consideration for her father kept her from vehemently expressing her opinion in opposition to him.

Rosalie Trent had a lover, to whom she was engaged—Hugh Herrick, who owned an adjacent plantation, smaller in extent than Colonel Trent's broad acres, but still a very tidy bit of land. He owned it in fee simple, entirely unencumbered. He was an orphan, and had been practically brought up in Colonel Trent's home.

A more tactful man than young Richard Trent, Hugh Herrick actually got on better with the old colonel than did any of his own children. Herrick was a young man of the highest character, and as good to look at, in a manly way, as Rosalie was from the standpoint of feminine beauty and character. The match was a desirable one from every point of view. It had received the old man's sanction.

Herrick was the captain of the local cavalry troop, which had its headquarters at the neighboring town of Staunton. Richard Trent, who was a year younger than his friend, was first sergeant of the same troop.

Herrick had carefully kept out of the discussions precipitated by the old colonel on the question of secession. His convictions as to his own proper course of action in case his State seceded from the Union were deep and abiding. Vir-

ginia and the South were to him supreme in their demand upon his allegiance. An aristocrat of aristocrats, he despised the North as an aggregation of fanatics and money grubbers, and was in fact anxious for secession.



"—I swear to God
I will never haul
down that flag!"

He was an impetuous, enthusiastic, hot-tempered young man, for all his tact and self-command. It was the realization of this that made him avoid the subject with Colonel Trent, for he knew that if once he began he would lose his self-control. He had many things to

learn, but there was good stuff in him, and he was fully worthy the affection and admiration of even so fair a girl as Rosalie. He had every quality for a lover—or for a cavalry officer, for that matter!

Rosalie also refused to discuss the subject with her lover. She had a mistaken idea that she could not reveal her real feelings even to him, without great disloyalty to her father. Herrick, therefore, had no idea as to what the woman he loved really thought of the burning question then uppermost in all minds. He dreaded to know, and was therefore glad not to insist upon any explanation from her. When he was with her he simply loved her; they talked lovers' nothings and let politics go hang!

The day came when the matter had to be settled one way or the other. Colonel Trent had a house in Staunton. He frequently went there for medical treatment which he could not get on his plantation;

consequently, he kept it open and ready for use at any time. Happening to be there on the morning the Act of Secession was proclaimed, he promptly flung to the breeze, from a flagstaff in front of his house, a large, new United States flag as an evidence of his feelings.

Then he had himself wheeled out on the front porch in his invalid chair and sat there grimly awaiting developments. They were not long in coming.

The first passer-by halted in astonishment at the sight. He looked from the flag to the stern old figure, and as he did so Colonel Trent lifted his hat in salute to the colors, with a proud glance at the rippling folds of the great banner.

Full of the news, the man started down the street on a dead run. Ten minutes later a mob had gathered before the house. They caught sight of the flag and the colonel—a slight rail fence being the only barrier between the mob and the old man—and they at once demanded that the flag be hauled down.

At the first roar from the mob the colonel's children, who had been busy indoors and had known nothing about the flag, came out on the porch and surveyed the scene in great surprise. Each acted on a different impulse.

Rosalie instantly stepped to the side of her father and placed her hand on the back of his chair, standing erect, confronting the angry people with the air and mien of a young goddess. Her heart sank at the terrible possibilities of the situation. Yet her course was clear; whatever happened, she must uphold her father.

Richard stopped halfway between the door and his father and stared at the old man and the flag in unspeakable dismay and confusion of mind. A dark flush spread over his handsome countenance. He realized that this was the hour in which he would have to choose; that a momentous decision was now forced upon him. He neither went to his father's side nor joined the mob, but stood between them. Thomas, the younger son, ran to the fence and climbed up in the boughs of an apple tree, where he could see and hear everything.

By this time the street had become black with people. They were growing irresponsibly angry as their demands remained unheeded, for the colonel met their appeals and com-

mands with a quiet disdain, a silent but none the less withering contempt.

Furious mutterings came from the crowd; shouts and curses fell upon the air of the pleasant spring morning. There was something dauntless in the appearance of the old soldier, and in the sight of his fair, proud, beautiful young daughter standing by his side, that had a sobering effect upon those nearest to them; but this was lost upon the constantly increasing multitude upon the outskirts.

A young lawyer of the city, a casual acquaintance, who had been drawn thither by idle curiosity, but who had divined the purpose of the mob, assumed the position of spokesman for the rest. He was not without hope of compromising the quarrel between the colonel and his fellow citizens, and spoke at first with the intent of persuading the old man to a reasonable course.

"Colonel Trent," he began, courteously, taking his hat in his hand and waving it for a silence which he had difficulty in winning, "I—"

"Down with the nigger lover!" shouted a voice—this in allusion to the fact that the colonel had recently freed his slaves.

"To hell with the old abolitionist!" cried another.

"Let him go to the United States, where he belongs!" yelled a third.

"Silence, please!" shouted the lawyer, seconded by others who wished to appeal to the recalcitrant veteran.

Some one in the crowd yelled "Mount him!" and in a few seconds the young attorney was forced to take his stand on the broad gate post, where all could see and hear him.

"Colonel Trent," he again began, so soon as he could secure comparative quiet from the now thoroughly roused people, "we have every respect for you personally as a man"—there were a few mutters of approval at this—"but for your opinions on secession, the question of the day, we have nothing but—contempt!"

It was a harsher word than he had

intended to use, but he was carried beyond himself by the fierce passion of the people; and this time a roar of applause burst from every throat. The sound inspired him to proceed more boldly.

"The sovereign State of Virginia, sir, has always been in favor of free thought and free speech, but it has reserved the right to curtail liberty of action in ac-

now command you to do it, lest the consequences to yourself should be serious."

"That is the flag of my country," said Colonel Trent, struggling to his feet. "I was born under it. I fought under it. I am willing to die under it! I am alone, unarmed, a cripple. You may kill me where I stand, but I swear to God I will never haul down that flag!"



"Miss Rosalie," pleaded the lover, "will you go with me?"

cordance with the will of the majority. Therefore, we demand that you lower that flag. You can go North if you wish to fly it, or to live under it."

"And who made you," asked the old soldier, incisely, "the voice of Virginia?"

"We did!" yelled a man in the crowd, and the mob echoed the declaration.

"There is my authority," answered the lawyer, grimly, pointing toward the sea of angry faces. "I beg you, I urge you, to take down that flag. Nay, I

He stepped to the side of the porch, reached out his hand, cast off the halcyons and gathered them to his breast.

There was something noble and inspiring in the appearance of the old man. For a moment the mob was checked. Then young Richard spoke.

"Friends," he cried, passionately, striding to the edge of the porch, "I—"

"Are you a friend to such as these?" interrupted the old man, scornfully, but his son gave no heed.

"You know how I feel on this question. I am heart and soul for Virginia."

"You shall never more be my son, sir!" cried the colonel, and his words were received with a roar of execration from the people.

Again Richard paid no attention.

"But this is my father. He is an old man, an old soldier. I wish to God he hadn't raised that flag. It has no place here. We don't want to see it unless we meet it in front of our guns and swords, to beat it down. But he is my father. I should be a coward, a craven, if I allowed anyone to mistreat him. Who attacks him must first deal with me!"

He stepped to the side of the old man, and although his father thrust him violently from him he resolutely kept his position. The pressure of the mob, most of whom were too far away to get the effect of Richard's fine and noble defense, pushed the others against the fence. The thin, slight paling gave way; the lawyer on the post, who had been endeavoring to control the situation, was pitched headlong into the mass, which surged toward the porch. Young Thomas fell from the tree on the back of the ringleader, to whom he clung like a wildcat.

Rosalie sprang to her father's side, placing her arm around him. The old man, assisted by both children, struggled to advance upon the people, who were seething and raging in front of him. Just as violent hands were lifted to strike him there was a clattering of hoofs on the street.

Some one had told Herrick that a mob threatened Colonel Trent. Gathering a handful of his men who happened to be at hand, arming them as best he could in the hurry, they galloped down the street toward the thick of the fray. As they raced along they formed themselves in military order. Some had pistols, some swords. They forced their way through the crowd at the critical moment. Their appearance made an instant diversion. Without using their weapons, by threateningly handling and exhibiting them,

they at last reached the porch and drove back the ringleaders. The mob was in bad temper, however, and weapons began to appear here and there.

The colonel had been forced backward. Richard, with torn clothes and other evidences of fierce fighting about his person, was standing in front of him, with clinched fists and blazing eyes. Rosalie, white as death, was still supporting him. Some one had wrenched the halcyards from the colonel's hand in the *mêlée* and the flag was down, torn to tatters by the furious men. Herrick spoke to the people briefly and directly.

"You have had your way," he cried, with cutting scorn; "you have assaulted an old cripple, an unarmed man and a woman. You have hauled down that flag. If you don't disperse by the time I count ten, so help me God, I'll open fire upon you!"

He drew a big revolver from his holster as he spoke, cocked it and gave orders to his men. Those who had firearms followed their young leader's example.

"What gives you authority over us, Hugh Herrick?" snarled some one, resentfully.

"This," answered Herrick, promptly, taking a paper from his pocket and shaking it aloft. "It is a commission as captain of cavalry from the sovereign State of Virginia, God bless her!"

"Three cheers for Captain Herrick and the Black Horse Cavalry!" cried a man, alluding to the local name of the troop.

"One! Two! Three! Four!" began Herrick, imperturbably, utterly indifferent to the cheering, and as the men nearest him looked on his rigid face they realized that his threat to shoot would be made good without fail. By the time he had reached "six" the mob was in motion. At "ten" they were scattered in all directions and moving rapidly.

Presently the street was deserted save for the uninformed troopers. There were but a dozen of them, and Herrick divided them into two squads and directed them to patrol the block in every direction. He also dispatched a mes-

sage to the mayor and the city marshal, telling them what had been done, and suggesting that steps be taken to prevent any further molestation of Colonel Trent. Then he dismounted from his horse and approached the porch.

"That was fine; that was splendid of you, Herrick!" began Richard.

"It was nothing at all," said Herrick. "The cowards! To take advantage of an old man and a woman!"

By this time the colonel had been helped to his feet and had once more gained his chair.

"Mr. Richard Trent," he began, with measured formality in spite of the fierce anger burning in his heart, "you have this day publicly cut yourself off from me as Virginia has cut herself off from the Union. You may go. I wish to see no more of you."

"Father——" protested the young man.

"Do not say another word, sir. I am done with you. Go!"

Richard stared at the colonel's face for a moment, then squaring his shoulders and turning abruptly, he dashed into the house.

"Thomas, I have heard nothing from you. What do you decide?" asked the colonel.

"I don't—know—sir," faltered the boy, very much frightened. "Give me time to think it over."

His father had never before honored him by asking his opinion, and he was bewildered and very much alarmed at the terrible severity of the old man's manner.

"Very well. You are young yet. You shall have time. I wish to be just to all men. As for you," continued the colonel, turning to Herrick, "if I mistake not, you said something about a commission from the State of Virginia in her armed force, which is to be used——"

"In her defense, sir," interrupted Herrick, swiftly.

"I can only think against the United States, after Sumter," went on the old man, sternly.

"If necessary, yes," admitted Herrick, hotly.

"Very well, sir. Here stands my daughter, Miss Rosalie Trent. You have been betrothed to her with my sanction. You will this day choose between the United States and Virginia, that paper and this lady. Retain the one and lose the other."

"By Heaven, sir——" began Herrick, impetuously.

"The subject admits of no discussion," returned the colonel, immediately. "I am for the United States. I will have no fellowship with its enemies."

"And what do you say?" asked Herrick, turning to the girl he adored, who stood, white-faced and desperate, by her father's side.

Her throat was dry, she could not articulate. She looked from the old man she honored and cherished to the young man she loved and adored.

"I—I——"

"Speak, miss!" thundered her father, striking the arm of his chair. "Do you desert me, too? The Union?"

"Miss Rosalie——" pleaded the lover.

"Hugh," she began, softly, at last, "you know that I love you, but I must go with father. My sympathies——"

"Rosalie," cried her father, sternly, "what are you saying? Are you for the United States or are you for——"

"Rosalie," said Herrick again, this time more quietly and with a strange dignity in his voice, "your father has forced this choice upon me. I am warranted in passing it on to you. I love you, God knows! To win you for my wife has been the dream of my life; but Virginia needs all her sons—and daughters. I propose to devote myself to her service absolutely. Will you go with me? As my wife, will you do all that a wife can for the cause of the South?"

"You are cruel!" cried the girl. "Can't you see?"

"I see nothing but that I must choose between you and Virginia, that you must choose between Virginia and your father."

"Right for once, sir," said the colonel. "And which do you choose, Hugh?" asked Rosalie, feeling in some way insulted at being made the subject of pub-

lic contention between these two passionately angry men.

"I choose Virginia!" answered her lover, his temper at the seething point. "And you——"

"I choose my father!"

"You have had your answer, Captain Herrick," said the old soldier, an aggravating note of triumph in his voice. "You, too, can go."

Speechless, the young man turned away. He was too angry yet to realize what he had lost, although his honor would not have permitted him to make any other choice if he had been given abundant opportunity to weigh the matter in cold blood. As for the young girl, she was too outraged and indignant to realize what she had relinquished, although her love and reverence for her father, her sense of duty to him, if she had enjoyed abundant leisure for consideration, would perforce have made her stand by the lonely, crippled, but indomitable old figure by her side.

Without a glance, Herrick flung himself savagely into the saddle. Before his horse moved off Richard Trent came out on the porch.

"Going, Herrick?" he said, striving desperately to speak unconcernedly. "I'll go with you. Good-by, father"—he might as well have addressed a stone image. "Good-by, Rosalie."

"I forbid you to speak to him!" cried her father, but the girl ran to her brother, and, taking him in her arms, kissed him tenderly.

"Good-by, youngster," continued Richard.

"Good-by, Bud," said Thomas, choking back a sob and shaking his brother's hand vigorously.

Richard lingered a moment and then walked away, his hand on the pommel of Herrick's saddle. The latter restrained the pace of his horse to suit that of his friend. Herrick, never turning, held his head high, although his heart was breaking. Richard, younger and less self-contained, bent his head and stumbled along beside the horse, tears rolling down his cheeks.

Back on the porch, the girl threw herself on her knees at the side of her father, buried her face in her hands, and shook with dry sobs. The old man laid his tremulous hand upon her bowed head. He said nothing as to her disobedience of a moment since. Presently he looked at the trembling boyish figure of his youngest son, standing irresolutely before him.

"I give you until to-morrow to decide, sir," he said, sternly. "I will have no uncertainties about me now."

Thus Virginia had gone out of the Union and so the deadly war had begun.

THE SHRINE

SAY not that ye know Love who have not known
Renunciation—Love's interpreter;
'Tis when ye walk the lonely way with her
That Love most blest and worshipful is shown:

Ye bring your little gifts in sacrifice,
But never pass the outer court's confine;
Too high, too holy, that far inner shrine
Where Love itself upon the altar lies.

ROSANNA CARROLL.

The Cult of New Beauty

By Kate Masterson

IN our great-grandmothers' stern old days beauty was something of a detriment in a girl. It made her too popular with the young men; it was apt to foster conceit and a love of dress, and was something generally to be guarded against as a species of witchcraft which carried no luck with it.

The village beauty, who in opera and literature always has such an interesting and enviable time, in the old days had her own share of troubles to contend with in the way of gossip in her absence and ill-natured remark in her presence—which is one of the reasons why the most beautiful women of history were not always the happiest.

Beauty in those days was a gift of the gods rather than a matter of cultivation as it is to-day. Now it stands first among the desires of the daughters of Eve. Not that each woman longs for rose lips and melting eyes, but that she aspires for the cultivation of whatever individual charm she may possess, knowing as she does that the new beauty is something apart from the perfection of line and coloring, although it may partake of them, and that health, cultivation of mind, the most exquisite care of her person and good taste in her dress are quite sufficient to rank a woman of even ordinary good looks as a beauty.

This may seem amazing to an artist who demands a certain rigid perfection in his model; but the beauty student who studies the portraits and miniatures of our latter-day types of loveliness will find few of the faces that in older days were ranked with the beauty roses in the girl garden.

Intellect and a certain pride, strength

or whatever it is that we call "style," mark the modern beauty. Her head is well carried, her hat and gown well thought out, her charm compelling perhaps, but it is not the charm of doll prettiness, and if it expresses one trait more strongly than any other it is cultivation and an alert intelligence.

The Madonna type is extinct; the eyes of the modern woman look out frankly at the world; coquettishness is relegated to the soubrette, and the *ingénue* is a stage fashion. Every woman knows to-day that unless she be facially deformed she may be beautiful—with the new beauty, which is never found as the old peaches-and-cream type frequently was—at its best in Phyllis, the dairymaid, rather than her mistress.

The development of a new idea is frequently foreshadowed in the theater. Within the memory of the present generation the type of feminine beauty on the stage has veered from the extreme of the accented physical to the intellectual, with spirituality the *desideratum* rather than fleshly charm or the exuberant bloom that was demanded not so many years ago.

A list of the feminine stars of little more than a decade ago will prove this. The vogue was for the fine woman, and the little ones were relegated to soubrette and *ingénue* rôles, never to the important parts. But almost imperceptibly the Junos have retreated to the rear, and the heroines of fiction as well as of drama have become the highly sensitive, finely strung and reposeful types rather than the emotional and brilliant beauties that panted, throbbed and queened it in the three-volume novel and the four-act melodrama of old times.

Fashions, too, underwent sweeping

changes; bulging *coiffures* and accented curves were condemned as inartistic and commonplace. With the banishment of much that made life unbeautiful to art lovers, the face and form of woman grew toward a cultivation that appealed to the higher senses.

How much our American illustrators had to do with it, who can say? To-day the girls of Christy, Gibson, Wenzell, Underwood and other artists illuminate our magazine covers with their charm, but it takes no close study to reveal that charm as spiritual, psychic and dainty in its suggestion.

Toward these standards the modern woman strives, even to the lines of her gowns, which have become soft, clinging, silent draperies, instead of the rustling taffetas and glittering spangles of seasons gone by. Sealskin and diamonds have been replaced by sables and pearls, roses have given way to violets, and the extremely smart woman keeps her rings in a cabinet rather than on her fingers.

The era of the simple feminine life has proved to be the subtle life—the life of soft, white muslin gowns lined with silk and hooked with gold. The mystery of woman has been added to, accented and made elusive, and the fashionable portrait gallery testifies to the new and infinitely interesting beauty that our artists, native and foreign, strive to portray, painting not only lines and draperies, but striving to express the mystic individuality—the charm of the woman soul.

In the old days the ugly girls accepted their lot as unalterable, and, in spite of what Henry James would call their unfortunate surfaces, they usually made better marriages than the pretty ones, for there did exist a certain wordless protest against too much beauty in women—Helen of Troy, Cleopatra and Venus having established historic precedents.

Crusty philosophers in those days made great hits when they declared beauty to be but skin deep or a snare of Satan. They became popular, for then women had not formed the habit of being beautiful—they accepted con-

ditions in this matter as in others. Thinking people to-day generally admit that beauty—the new beauty, in which the mind has a part—is indicative of a heart, soul and intelligence, as well as a healthy, active mind and body.

Morbid poets, in want of a line, are fond of averring that, so far as the eternal man and woman are concerned, the world goes on in the same old way, and that the little pink god lights where he lists. This may be poetic, but it is not true. Matrimonial statistics bring forth amazing instances of marriages made in direct defiance of old saws and the established rules of romance.

Sons and daughters bring up their parents better than they used, and in the matter of marriage there is a lack of seriousness which some deplore. Natural selection, sometimes seemingly erratic, has more to do with the mating of young people to-day than the nearness of estates or of creeds, nationality or even social station.

If want of faith in aught is want of faith in all, then marriages should all be made in heaven. But Meredith was only a rhymers in need of a well-sounding sentiment. We are too used to accepting our poets as truth tellers when they are only dreamers.

Every one knows that marriages are not arranged as they used to be, nor do they occur as they used, before the vogue of the simple life came in, from propinquity or suitability of temperament or conditions. The new beauty, which is psychic, lures the millionaire to wed the shop girl, and the heiress to marry the *matinée* actor.

The modern girl observes this phase of life with interest. If she studies, she learns that while this sort of thing was rare in older times, it is the rule to-day. It occasions little or no comment. She may not be naturally æsthetic enough to love beauty for its own sake, but in that case she is all the more likely to be gifted with a shrewdness that tells her that to be alive and a girl is to be beautiful, if she wills it so.

So the woman of to-day is straining for the golden apple and making the most of even the poorest charm she may

possess. The old-time girl wept because her hair was red, but the new girl brushes hers until it is a burnished glory, wears a brown picture hat, believes in herself, and lo!—she is a beauty!

The new beauty cult calls not so much for line, curve or coloring, as for the healthful glow that comes from tubing and exercise; the hopeful eyes and pleasant lips that suggest a mind untainted with small envies, meannesses or unkindness. Beyond that, proper corseting, tasteful dressing and a good carriage, and you have your new beauty, though her nose may tilt or own a freckle.

Mothers were wont to discourage the beauty cult, for they not only had the historic ladies' records in mind, but they knew in the sixties that the only way that opened to the ugly girl was the way of cosmetics—of powders and of paints, of padding and false hair; all the hideous vulgarities that went with the time of parlor stoves and chromos.

Women there were who enameled their faces as we do furniture nowadays when it grows worn a bit. To-day the ambitious old ladies massage the wrinkles, and if the skin is hopelessly yellow, they have a beauty doctor take it off and let a new one grow. Not a pleasant process, but at least not a whitewashing!

Beauty to-day is a science rather than a gift of nature, and the woman who concentrates upon it masters it. She copes with her difficulties, and if she has only one dimple, she dazzles you with it until you forget the rest, and carry an idea of her piquant individualism.

Up-to-date beauty has its very foundation in those processes that we call grooming.

The modern man is well up in women's dressing. As a baby he begins to pore over the fashion plates in his mother's magazine, and to learn of the mysterious beings so wonderfully unlike the only woman he yet knows. The old-time boy regarded women as mysteries—and girls as impossible. The new boy is quite aware that his sister

beats him at tennis and gives him a run on the links. She also educates him as to the best way to fix his hair and the kind of scarfpin not to wear.

Girl is the main topic nowadays with artists who used to do sheep and approaching storms before the days of the new beauty. With fictionists, essayists, newspapers—even with the English magazines—the subject of the girl is never ending in interest.

All things are changed under the sun! Stockings may be blue, but they must not wrinkle. *Mrs. Jellaby* would not be humorous in modern fiction. She would have to brush her hair and put the hooks on her gown—or we could not allow our mothers to read the book.

"It is every woman's duty to be beautiful," says our most famous dimple doctor. It is more—it is part of her religion; it is her expression of the desire for all things harmonious and lovely as the flower that she plants in her window and turns toward the sun—that it may grow and give its perfume and its message to all that look upon it.

The danger of a too great success threatened the American girl until the new beauty cult came in. She had made her way into everything—from raising violets to climbing steeples. She had begun to wear mannish hats and clubby ties. She was undoubtedly a good chum, but men were getting a little bit afraid of her.

But with the hunt for beauty, femininity has asserted itself, and holds every mother's daughter in a net of baby ribbon and lace and invisible pins—things that no man, no matter how he may study the women's magazines, will ever thoroughly understand—with half-tone illustrations as a guide.

The beauty cult came just in time to balance feminine progress, which ugly girls were taking up as an aggressive stand; not defending their position so much as maintaining it. Then the truth dawned upon them that beauty must always be progressive with a girl burdened with a snub nose or light eyelashes to begin with. And there are no more ugly girls.

The Price of Sue

By L. Constans

AS the train pulled into Podgeville two men alighted—one at the front, the other at the rear end of the car. As the train pulled out, the glare of disgust with which each had greeted the first knowledge of the other's presence faded, and they nodded stiffly.

The one was a frank, manly young countryman of about twenty-six; the other, a round-faced, florid old gentleman, whose wide expanse of defiantly laundered shirt front, rhinestone stud and dilapidated suit of broadcloth marked him as one of those small-town capitalists; one of the kind that prides himself upon his ability to get ahead of mankind in general.

As they meandered past each other awaiting the arrival of the village 'bus, the younger man tried to force a smile, but his jaws locked. Jim Bedloe had cause for detesting old man Squires. Two weeks before he had asked him for his daughter, laying before him, with pardonable pride, his life prospectus, with its fifteen thousand working capital—only to be rejected, with the discouraging admonishment to make it three times fifteen before presuming to call again.

The girl, he it said to her credit, as an earnest of honest intentions, bravely offered to fulfill her vow, parental objection notwithstanding; but Jim Bedloe was proud—he would measure up to the requirements or acknowledge himself unworthy, deficient. Such were the younger man's cogitations.

The elder man's were more worldly—more to the point at issue. The Decatur & Southern Railway Company, with a capitalization of over two millions of

dollars, was purposing to build a magnificent first-class railroad between Decatur on the north, and Summitville on the south, a distance of almost fifteen actual miles, thus opening up to the trunk lines that had to pass through Decatur on their way between more important points, a territory claimed to be unrivaled in mineral wealth. To accomplish their object it was necessary to pierce the stronghold of Scrub Mountains, a rangy little set of hills that acquired its right to title by the uniformly dwarfed state of the vegetation that struggled for existence on its otherwise barren slopes. According to the purposed route, but one point of thoroughfare was accessible—Tourgee's Pass; a little valley that cut the hills in twain with the mud-stained Tourgee River.

This was the objective point of Jonathan Squires. The man who acquired possession of that pass could, he calculated, name his own price to the unsophisticated directors of the D. & S. Ry.; and somehow he divined that Jim Bedloe, with his working capital of fifteen thousand, and unlimited self-confidence, had arrived at the same conclusion.

His breath was replenished by long, far-apart intakes, the result of deep meditation, as he gazed across the fields to Crocker's Pass, a mile away—the only other pass, besides Tourgee's, that cut Scrub Mountains clean in two.

It had first been the intention of the D. & S. to build through this pass, but the apathy of the citizens of Bellefield, a little hamlet to the eastward, to provide a bonus of twenty thousand dollars for the distinction of being placed on a railroad map, had been tellingly rebuked



"Jim Bedloe, we might as well come to an understandin' now as later——"

by the haughty railroad directors altering their plans and adopting the route via Tourgee's Pass, eight miles to the west.

As the two men climbed into the precarious vehicle that conveyed intrepid passengers from Podgeville to Tourgee's Inn, the younger man purchased a copy of the Podgeville *Herald* from an urchin who announced the importance of its possession with persuasive eloquence. A glare of refusal from Jonathan Squires struck him dumb.

As the 'bus rumbled away through the dust, Jim Bedloe again relaxed. Thoughts of Susan Squires and a future accounting prompted him to be at least civil. "Would you like to look at the paper, Mr. Squires?" he ventured, as he gingerly proffered the unfolded paper.

"Nop! I ain't got no time to waste on such foolery," was the characteristic acknowledgment. "I hear more news in a day than they print in a week—an' I hear it straight!" was the boast.

Again the two resumed their former

silence, Jim Bedloe perusing his paper with unusual avidity, while Jonathan Squires gazed sullenly out at the scantily clothed hills of Scrub Mountains. There was a worried look in his eyes. He knew his companion was determined enough to hazard that fifteen thousand to accomplish his object, and he knew, too, that Jonathan Squires would never lay down to any man as long as he had a dollar to his name. Such a conflict of stubbornness could produce only one result—Jonathan Squires would have to pay more than fifteen thousand dollars for Tourgee's Pass. A property he knew, without competition, he could secure easily for five thousand. Such a needless waste of money galled.

At last his cupidity spoke; the man himself was still sullenly defiant.

"Jim Bedloe, we might as well come to an understandin' now as later—it'll be cheaper all 'round."

The younger man's paper crushed together with a rumble at sound of the unexpected voice. Jim Bedloe was alert attention.

"You're goin' t' try to buy Tourgee's Pass!" was the bold accusation.

Jim Bedloe's lips clasped—it was the first news he had received of the fact, and he discreetly held his silence, pending further enlightenment. He was on a visit to an aunt who lived midway between Podgeville and Tourgee's Inn.

"I say you're goin' t' try—but you ain't goin' to buy it!" continued the other, doggedly. "That's my business!"

No answer forthcoming, the speaker forged on more confidently.

"Now, I've got a proposition to make. We've had some difference outside of business, but that cuts no figyur in a business transaction. At that, I ain't got nothing agin' you as a son-in-law, except I want a man that can work along with me, and you don't seem t' fill the bill."

Jim Bedloe bit his lips in resentment, but he held his temper—he was curious to hear the business proposition.

"And the proposition?" he inquired, warily, fearful of displaying his ignorance.

"Is this," resumed the other, innocently. "You know that the Decatur & Southern Railway is goin' to build a line from Decatur to Summitville. You know, too, as well as I do, something that the D. & S. directors don't know—that when they gave up the Bellefield-Crocker's Pass route, that there was only one other pass through Scrub Mountains—Tourgee's Pass." Jim Bedloe nodded his head. He knew the country foot by foot and grasped the situation immediately.

"Now, you're after Tourgee's Pass, an' so am I," informed Mr. Squires, "and if we go to biddin' agin' each other, no one'll benefit but old man Tourgee. You'll get nothing, and I'll have t' pay more'n fifteen thousand for the property, which, on t'other hand, could be bought for probably five."

Jim Bedloe nodded knowingly. "And the proposition?" he insisted, cautiously.

"You keep off an' I'll split the difference—I'll give you five thousand dollars!"

Visions of Susan Squires swam before the blurred eyes of the younger

man. Five thousand nearer Sue! And all through a bit of sheer good luck. Surely the goddess of fortune was playing his hand. He sank back in his corner, overwhelmed. Jonathan Squires took it as a signal of weakness, and pressed his point with renewed vigor.

"Five thousand's better'n nothing," he vouchsafed, temptingly. "Mebbe you'll have better luck next time. But it's a good idee, when you can't get what you want, to take what you can get."

This hard-headed logic woke Jim Bedloe to the exigency of the situation, and he lost no time in realizing upon his good fortune.

"Cash?" he inquired, suspiciously.

"Check!" responded the other, irritably. The implication riled him. "Jonathan Squire's name is good for twenty times five thousand."

"Cash!" was the determined iteration. Jim Bedloe was going to take no chance with his luck.

"But that's all I brought with me for the deal," was the wrathful excuse offered.

"Ain't your check good?" was the quick-witted retort. And Jonathan Squires, comprehending that he had been judged by his own words, bowed to the situation, crushed with chagrin. This unassuming young man, whom he had adjudged unworthy of trust, was shrewder than he had suspected. Surly he counted out the money he had brought to consummate his purchase.

"You'll do nothing at Tourgee's?" he insisted, as he shoved the roll of bills at the other.

"Never leave the 'bus," was the emphatic assurance. And he didn't.

When the coach reached Tourgee's Inn and Jonathan Squires alighted, Jim Bedloe answered the inquiring look of the driver with the simple explanation: "I'm going back with you. I'll get off at the halfway crossroad." And then, as they lumbered along on the return trip, he tried, through the mist of a thousand conflicting emotions, to read the Podgeville *Herald*, the symbol of enlightenment under the generalization



Jonathan Squires encountered a highly-inflated young man strutting up and down the platform.

of "news"—the scorn of Jonathan Squires.

Suddenly his roving eyes paused, then fixed upon an article that seemingly stood out in embossment. His brain tottered as he read, and then the type became hopelessly pied.

A knock on the head and an enormous bolus of "fine cut" recovered his equilibrium.

"Gee-whillikers!" he exploded, by way of compromising with his pent-up emotions; and then to the driver, as nonchalantly as possible: "I guess I'll go on to Podgeville."

That evening, as Jonathan Squires, elated by the successful consummation of his plans, alighted at Podgeville from the Tourgee bus, he encountered a tall, highly-inflated young man strutting proudly up and down the station platform, a copy of the Podgeville *Herald* protruding prominently from a rear pocket. But Jonathan Squires was too well satisfied with his day's work to harbor resentment against any of earth's creatures, even a parvenu capitalist, so he clambered companionably into a seat with him as the train pulled out.

"A purty good day's work all 'round," he volunteered, patronizingly. "Old Tourgee is tickled t' death—he was achin' t' get rid of that property, anyway; I'm purty well satisfied; an' you didn't do so bad, either," he pointed out, beamingly.

"No, I ain't got no complaint to make," was the quiet acquiescence. "Man don't generally get two good strikes the same day. See the news?" he inquired, quickly, heading off the question he saw forming upon the other's lips. "Something here I think'll interest you," he continued, suavely, as he pulled forth the Podgeville *Herald* and pointed to an article in one corner.

And Jonathan Squires took the despondent sheet, and, with eyes that bulged more and more, read:

Hurrah for Bellefield! Last night, at an enthusiastic meeting of all the prominent

citizens of that hustling little community, the necessary bonus of twenty thousand dollars to secure the Decatur & Southern Railway was promptly subscribed, and a representative of the road present immediately signified the willingness of the D. & S. to build the line as originally purposed.

This will be of decided benefit to our own little metropolis, bringing the D. & S. road through Crocker's Pass, not more than a stone throw away. Now let the slogan be: "A station for Podgeville!" Where there's a will there's a way; and where there's a way, there ought to be a station.

As Jonathan Squires finished reading his face flushed.

"Why didn't you show me that sooner?" he demanded, excitedly. "I could uh got that pass, too, from young Crocker," he explained, ruefully.

"Wouldn't done you no good to try," was the laconic answer. "I bought it from him six hours ago!"

"You?" The voice was full of incredulity.

"Yep! Took a purty stiff figure, though—young Crocker was on to the game himself. Twenty thousand," vouchsafed the other. "Your five just pulled me through," was the candid admission. "But it's worth fifty."

"Fifty! We can git seventy-five thousand for it!" In the excitement attendant upon a brilliant opportunity, Jonathan Squires forgot his position.

"We?" The cold, cutting intonation of Jim Bedloe's voice brought him back to earth.

Jonathan Squires turned crimson, then red, then purple, but not with rage—then a small, crackling sound came from between his teeth. It was his manner of laughing when anything struck him as particularly good. He saw the humor of the situation and succumbed—a good loser.

"I'll give you twenty-five thousand for a half interest?" he offered, gamely.

"And Sue?" was the lover's anxious inquiry.

"Yep—and Sue. I guess you'll fill the bill."

OUR ESTEEMED CONTEMPORARIES

"With malice towards none."

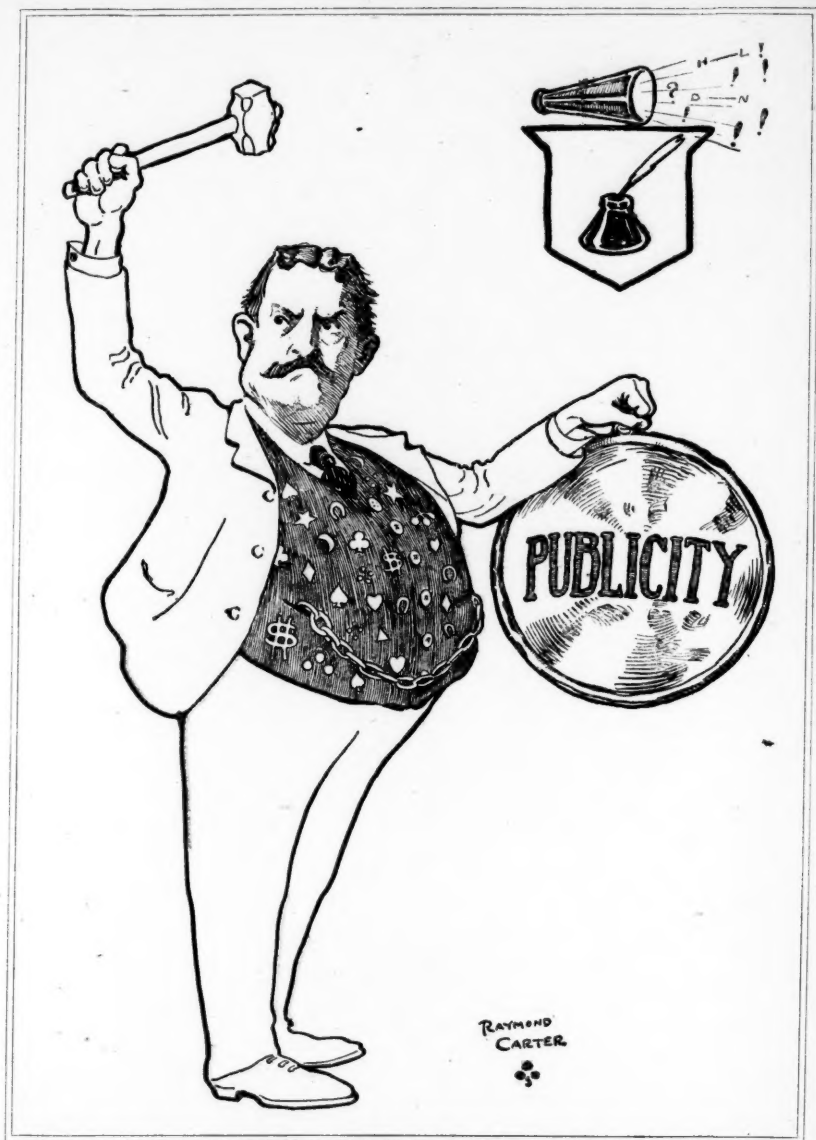


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(To Be Continued.)

The Serious Side of Burlesque

By Joseph M. Weber

THERE is more to the burlesque business than just the mirth and the music, the fun and frivolity. There is a serious side, which involves a world of worry, of business and of risk. To an outsider it seems absurd to say that the mere production—that is, the preliminary expense—of such a piece as “Higgledy-Piggledy,” for instance, involves the expenditure and possible loss of from forty thousand to fifty thousand dollars. But such is the fact. Then, too, the work is enormous. Of the risk, it may be truthfully said that you have no way of telling whether you will ever get back a penny of your investment. If the public likes your show—yes! You get back your thousands and many more; but if it does not happen to strike that fickle thing, the public fancy, you have nothing but loss, loss, loss.

It takes all of six weeks to prepare for the production of such a burlesque. The first two weeks are spent in getting up the models for the scenery and the costume plates, and in the selection of the proper stage effects. Four weeks of actual rehearsal follow. In our music hall, the composer generally gets the book from the librettist.

Then comes the work of the master carpenter in building to order the frames for the canvas scenes to be stretched upon. Then the scenes are painted.

The selection of a company is no easy task. We must get a prima donna, a comedy or character woman, clever at imitations, a “straight” man, a character

man, a low comedy man, and a stage-manager who has a picturesque mind, an eye for color and for groupings. He must know something about dancing, and, preferably, know how to dance himself and to teach others. He gets the book from the author with a blank page opposite each page of typewriting, on which he lays out the positions of the principals and chorus. This is called “diagraming.”

One of the most important features of a show like those we give is the chorus. The girls must first of all be pretty, then shapely, able to sing and dance and to wear clothes so as to show off to their very best advantage the costly gowns we buy for them. There must be at least sixty of them, and they must all be “first liners.” Other shows can afford to have five or six stunners and the rest “fillers,” but we must get the best on the market, no matter what it costs.

The first rehearsal is an interesting thing. The chorus is called, and they sit around on the stage while a pianist plays the melodies and a vocalist sings them. When they have learned the words and the music, the stage-manager shows them their stage positions and the business which he and the librettist have originated for the chorus in each musical number.

One week after this the first rehearsal for the principals is called, and the author reads the book to them, explaining the characters, the situations and the scenes. After a week of this, the positions are rehearsed, and finally comes the dress rehearsal.

The music hall is a hobby with me.

It occupies a place not held by any other sort of playhouse. Its function is to brush away the cobwebs from the brains of busy men, to present the sunny side of life and to please all the senses simultaneously. The eye is pleased by the stage pictures filled with handsome women, artistically gowned; the ear by the catching music; the sense of taste by anything you choose to order while enjoying a performance; and the sense of smell by the fragrance of your favorite cigar, which you may smoke during the performance.

Then the fun is fast and furious, not merely an occasional joke, which half tempts you to smile, but a continual roar of laughter, which makes boys and girls of us all.

In the music halls of London and Paris, some of the greatest productions of Europe are originated. There they give burlesque and vaudeville together, and that is what we did here at first, but the American vaudeville stage grew so rapidly that the field was thoroughly covered in the variety houses, and so we eliminated this feature.

Ballade of April Tide

By Rose Mills Powers

SING a ballade of April tide!
Flash of sunlight and fling of rain—
Glint of green on the countryside—
A robin's note at the window pane,
Days when the heart can scarce restrain
The rapture born of the budding spring,
When true love ditties besiege the brain,
These be halcyon hours to sing!

Sing a ballade of April tide!
And hey for the hap of the lovelorn swain,
For now his lady is sunny-eyed,
Anon she flouts him with fine disdain,
Anon she loves him with might and main,
With lips uplifted and hands that cling,
Then hey and ho for the trysting lane,
April lovers, to you I sing!

Sing a ballade of April tide!
Out on the cynics who would maintain
April as arrogance typified,
And moody of temper through all her reign;
Pouts a-plenty she has, 'tis plain,
But pouts so pleasing—the winsome thing—
No matter what angle the weather-vane,
Showers and sunshine alike I sing!

ENVOI.

Prince, my lute has but one refrain,
When herald robins begin to wing
And the crocus gleams on the lawn again,
Ballades of April then I sing!



For a little while she lay there, her face still pale and drawn.

The Heart Convention

By Mary Roberts Rinehart

MOST of the dancing crowd had gone home. In its balcony overlooking the great hall the Hungarian orchestra, weary of the endless round of two-steps and waltzes, had lapsed into the plaintive folk songs of its native land, and from the bowling alley outside there came through the open windows an occasional rumble and the clatter of over-turned pins. But in the card room "bridge" was in full blast.

Over in a corner Bobby Whittaker and Wilson Miller were fighting for the rubber against Margaret Winston and Ashley Hall. Margaret Winston was not playing in her usual form. Twice she had played from the wrong hand and had lost a trick by so doing, although possibly the fact that young

Hall, being "dummy," took advantage of his leisure to watch her with eloquently adoring eyes, had something to do with her misplays. Now, as the cards were dealt for the decisive hand, even that young gentleman became absorbed in the game, but the girl's attention was wandering. Over at the next table the players were vociferously quarreling, and she watched them amusedly.

Bobby Whittaker dealt and bridged the make, and Miller, half doubtfully, made it "no trump." With a little ring of triumph in his voice, Ashley Hall doubled, and all three waited for the girl to lead.

The moment the card was down she realized her error. Of course she should have led a heart. How in the world had she forgotten that hateful "heart convention"? Well, it was too late now!

She looked up defiantly. Wilson Miller's gaze was frankly amused, while Whittaker was sorting his cards with elaborate care, and as for Ashley, Ashley the adoring, *he* was actually glaring at her!

"That settles it," he said, savagely. "You fellows have it all your own way with a crazy lead like that. Go on, Whittaker."

But Margaret laid down her cards and rose, pale and furious.

"Even 'bridge' does not excuse an insult," she said icily. "Bobby, you pay up for me, and I'll settle with you after I get my wraps."

Hall was on his feet, too.

"I—I'm awfully sorry, Margaret. I didn't mean to say that. You know how 'bridge' makes boors of us fellows, and I wouldn't have hurt you for the world."

But Margaret looked haughtily past him at the other table.

"Are you people going to play all night?" she called. "It's late now, and we have to get up pretty early if we are going to breakfast at Lookout Point." Her voice was very brave, but perhaps the smile was a little forced. In answer the chairs were pushed back noisily, and the laughing, chattering crowd made its way through the room to the door, calling good-nights right and left as it passed. The three men from Margaret's table followed, Ashley Hall, utterly dejected, in the rear. Bobby Whittaker, with an elaborate strategy that deceived no one, remembered something he had forgotten, and waylaid Margaret at the foot of the stairs as she came down, her long driving coat thrown carelessly over her arm.

"I say, Margaret," he said, "Mrs. Van Wirt's going back in the cart with Whitney, and I wish you would take her place. You can drive, if you care to, you know. You'll have to sit with Hall otherwise, and"—he lowered his voice—"I haven't seen you alone for one minute since you came."

"Why, yes, of course. I'd like it very much. But I'm not at all angry with Ashley Hall—I am merely entirely indifferent."

Mr. Whittaker whistled.

"That's worse," he said. "I'd rather be scratched and clawed—metaphorically, of course—than simply ignored. Come on."

It was late when the coach finally started. The moon was throwing a cool white light on the verandas of the country club, bringing into relief the small, white pavilions which dotted the grounds, and gleaming in a thousand bright reflections from the waters of the bay just beyond. The coach itself, with the bright hats and vari-colored wraps of the girls, looked like a huge bouquet, to which Alicia Whitney's red silk dust cloak lent a poppy-like note of color.

The horses were fresh, and Bobby Whittaker had little chance to talk to Margaret, now that he had obtained the coveted opportunity. And the girl, with her eyes fixed on the white stretch of road ahead, held her small chin tilted at an angle so haughty that only the moon could have guessed its occasional quivering, or the unshed tears that blurred the scene before her. Back of her, Ashley Hall sat with folded arms and set features, in a cold rage at himself, at Margaret, at all the world.

"You must have lost a lot, Ashley." Felicia Whitney eyed him shrewdly. Ashley nodded, too morose to speak.

"Bobby seems to be in luck," she went on, tormentingly. "Well, it's been a bad evening all round. I played for hours with that frump of a Van Wirt woman, and she not only revoked twice and trumped my trick three times, but she had the audacity to borrow fifteen dollars from me, and I never expect to see it again. Oh, it's really been a charming evening!"

"What's that about the Van Wirt woman?" asked Annette Burgwin, from the rear seat. "I couldn't hear it all, with Wilson Miller making love as explosively as a steam calliope. Really, Wilson, I have the earache already. No, for gracious' sake, don't whisper; you whistle when you whisper. Can't you write it?"

Even Margaret smiled a little at this, but Ashley remained in impenetrable

gloom, looking ahead to where, far down the road, a black speck was rapidly taking form and resolving itself into a huge automobile. The leaders swerved a bit as the car approached.

"Steady, steady, Peggy!" called Whittaker, as the car, with a final "chauff," came to a standstill. "Why, it's the governor himself! What's up, dad?"

"Well, I don't know that anything's wrong," Mr. Whittaker, Sr., took off his leather cap and ran his fingers nervously over his bushy white hair. "But Ritchey took the small boat and went for a row just after you started to the club for dinner, and about an hour ago some of the stable men found the boat floating, bottom up, near the dock. Of course it would be just like Ritchey to land some place and forget to tie up, but I'm afraid not, I'm afraid not. His mother is very much worried."

There was a moment's alarmed silence, followed by a chorus of anxiety from the young people with whom Ritchey Whittaker had been such a favorite, and Felicia Whitney, to whom he had been paying marked attention in that boyish, erratic way of his, broke into hysterical sobbing.

"Here, Hall, you'd better drive the crowd home; the horses know you. Miller and I will go on with father. Don't be too much alarmed, you people.



Bobby Whittaker waylaid Margaret at the foot of the stairs.

It sounds like one of Ritchey's delightful little jokes."

A minute later the auto was flying down the road in a cloud of dust, while the four-in-hand followed at a smart clip. Had Ashley not been submerged in self-abasement, he would have noticed that Margaret's chin was no longer so haughtily tilted. A half mile saw it at its normal elevation, and what with anxiety for Ritchey and possibly propinquity to the subdued Hall, by the time the house was reached the angry lines in her face had entirely disappeared.

The Whittaker place was brilliantly lighted when they drew up. Hall threw

the lines to a groom and dashed down to the beach, where a little group of men were waiting. The girls hurried into the house, and, finding that their hostess had retired to her room and to the min-

possibilities of that overturned boat. Out on the bar a bell buoy kept up a monotonous ding-dong, although there was little or no sea running; and after a time she fell asleep. She was awakened by the departure of the doctor, who, without seeing her, got into his carriage and drove away.

Plainly the searching parties had not come back. The girl was nervous and chilly, and very wide awake. Almost aimlessly she wandered down the steps into the trim Italian garden, and from there to the beach. She stopped for a moment to listen, and, fancying she heard voices, turned in the direction from which the sounds came.

It was still very bright, and the incoming tide was breaking on the sand with a dull booming. In the wind her hat tugged at its fastenings, so she unpinned it and tossed it lightly over the stone wall which protected the garden from the encroachments of the sea. It was a pity that here again only the cold moon could see how distractingly pretty she looked as, with hands thrust deep in her ulster pockets, she started briskly along the sand.

Distance is deceptive on sandy beaches, and before she realized it the house was out of sight around a long curve. And still she had met no one.

The wind was almost a gale now, and the bay was covered with whitecaps. The surf was very heavy, and once or twice huge combers, breaking, crept up the beach almost to her feet. Driven back from the water's edge, where walking was easy, she found herself ankle-deep in soft sand, and realized suddenly that she was very tired. Lying directly across her path was the broken spar of some unfortunate vessel, and with a sigh of relief she sat down.



She tossed her hat lightly over the stone wall.

istrations of her maid, proceeded to follow her example. Margaret assisted Felicia Whitney to her room, and stayed with her until she became quieter. Then she went down to the moonlit piazza. Everything was profoundly still. Once the silence was broken by the arrival of the doctor, who was escorted to Mrs. Whittaker's room by her maid. Then all was still again.

Margaret leaned back in her big wicker chair and thought sadly of the probable fate of poor Ritchey Whittaker; her anger earlier in the evening seemed puerile and trifling now beside the tragic

Without any warning, a heavy cloud obscured the moon. From bright light the beach was plunged in deepest gloom, and she began to realize the uncanniness of her situation. For some minutes the white tops of the breakers were all she could distinguish; then her eyes became accustomed to the darkness. She must get home, she thought decidedly. Five minutes more and she would have an attack of nerves.

As she rose she gave a quick, half-frightened look around her. Then she sank down on the mast again and covered her face with her hands. Directly back of her, and not a dozen feet away, lay the body of a man. Her one horrified glance had shown her that he lay turned half on his face, with one arm doubled under his head as in sleep. For a moment her heart seemed to stop, then it began to throb with a violence that was almost pain.

"Ritchey!" she gasped, hysterically, and with one horror-stricken glance over her shoulder, she ran wildly toward home. The moon, emerging as suddenly as it had disappeared, checked her headlong flight, and with the light her courage came back. She stopped, and, turning around, looked back to where the mast lay—a clear, black streak against the sand.

What should she do? The tide was coming in, and if she waited to call help the poor fellow would be washed out again. Very slowly she turned and retraced her steps. A half dozen times she had to fight an impulse to run, but being a young woman of considerable courage, she kept on. She reflected thankfully that the body lay at Stony Point, and it would be quite easy there to find enough heavy stones to anchor it until help could be brought. All her plans depended on the duration of the moonlight. She knew perfectly well that the smallest cloud would send her down the beach in another headlong retreat.

The body was still beyond the reach of the waves. With a half sob the girl picked up a heavy stone, and, shutting her eyes, dropped it on the prostrate figure.

"Ow! good Lord!" The corpse sat

up suddenly with a bewildered air and more than a hint of profanity. "What the dev—"

But all he saw was a tumbled heap on the sand, which on inspection proved to be Margaret Winston, in a very profound state of unconsciousness. The corpse was astonished and exceedingly alarmed, but with a man's belief in whisky for all ills, he produced a very lifelike pocket flask, and poured out its contents—some down her throat, a very great deal over her face. In a few minutes she opened her eyes and shuddered.

"I must have fainted," she said, weakly. "I thought you were Ritchey, washed in, you know, and then you moved and spoke. It was terrible. Don't you think"—wanly smiling—"you've more than paid me for losing the game to-night?"

"Don't!" he said, hoarsely. "The shock was enough to have killed you. I'm always doing the wrong thing, somehow, where you are concerned. You see, we thought that if anything had happened to poor Ritchey he might come in here at the point, so I was stationed to watch this part of the beach. I was thinking pretty hard when you came along, and with that and the noise of the surf I didn't hear you."

Margaret pushed back her hair with hands that visibly trembled. "I must go," she said. "You would better wait here for the others."

But Mr. Hall settled himself more comfortably in the sand, and, folding his coat into a pillow, laid it on his knee.

"You know you're not able to walk any distance yet," he said, imperiously. "You put your head right here—it's the only comfortable position—and in a few minutes I will take you back." With strong yet gentle arms he drew her close and laid her head on the improvised cushion. She yielded passively, and for a little while lay there, her eyes closed, her face still pale and drawn. Then gradually a little color crept into her lips, and she moved as if to rise.

"Don't move, please don't," he said. "You're not strong enough yet to walk

back, and it means such a lot to me. I know you don't care anything about me, Margaret"—he was looking wistfully out over the water—"I'm a worthless sort of a chap, not half good enough for you, but I love you—I needn't tell you how much, I guess you know. I've always wanted to touch your pretty hair, like this, and now I'm holding you—and I want to forget that it's only for a little while——"

But Margaret gently freed herself and sat erect, her face averted.

"Don't you think you're taking too much for granted? You've never asked for all those privileges. It's just possible, you know, that I am better acquainted with the state of my affections than you are." She rose unsteadily. "I'm feeling stronger now. Suppose we start back."

"Margaret! Do you mean it?" he asked, incredulously.

"That I'm stronger? Why, yes. Oh, the other? Well, I wouldn't practically throw myself at your head as a jest."

In a moment his arms were around her, and this time there was a more admiring audience than the unresponsive moon to see how adorable is the love-light in a woman's eyes.

"And you forgive me for to-night?"

"Do you forgive me for forgetting that silly 'heart convention'?"

"Why, hello!" said a nearby voice. "This is an unexpected pleasure."

Ashley released Margaret suddenly and whirled around.

"Ritchey, by all that's holy! Where on earth have you been, you idiot? Don't you know the whole countryside has turned out to look for your body? Is this your idea of a joke?"

"Joke! Do I look jocular?" He held out a dripping coat and a sodden pair of shoes, looked at them disgustedly, and gave them a determined fling into the breakers. "I'm glad you did have a fright, though I'm sorry for the

mater. But for downright asininity just commend me to the average house party. Didn't either of you two precious idiots happen to hear the bell buoy ringing itself hoarse? And didn't it occur to you that the average bell buoy don't work itself nearly to death on calm evenings? It was quiet enough up to midnight."

"Do you mean——"

"I do, exactly. As well as I can calculate, my watch being now giving some hungry fish indigestion, I have been sitting on that thing for about four hours, and about half that time I've been under water. Every baby swell swallowed us. If the man at the lighthouse hadn't thought there was a whale out there tangled up in the rope, I'd have stuck there, I suppose, until I became a barnacle."

"But what on earth were you doing out there anyhow? You've no business to frighten people nearly out of their senses."

"You and Margaret did look awfully worried as I came up the beach. As to what I was doing, I was painting."

"Painting!" Margaret's voice showed that this was adding insult to injury.

"I thought I'd have a little surprise when the *Lorelei* went out past the buoy to-morrow—to-day, I suppose it is now—so I wrote out a few touching verses. I'd just finished the first one; it went something like this:

There was a bell buoy in the ocean,
Who said: "In this up-and-down mocean
I toss and I swing,
Till it makes my head ring,
But I work on with tireless devocean.

"Then I leaned over too far and the boat upset. Hello! here are some more of the searchers, and, by Jove, there's the preacher! What is this, anyhow—a Sunday-school convention?"

"It's a heart convention," said Margaret, shyly.

Madame Mansfield's Granddaughter

By Harriet A. Nash

THE erect figure stepping daintily along the smooth highway bore little resemblance to that great army of wanderers to which it was in actual experience closely allied. The long, gray cape, though pale in color from years of exposure to wind and weather, was neat and spotless; the wide poke bonnet, re-sewn and pressed by the wearer's hands, was adorned with ribbons which had passed through various stages in color during the memory of man, and now emerged from the dyer's hands a vivid green, quite at variance with the foliage of the pink roses which nodded cheerily from among its carefully ironed folds. The roses had the best of it—a triumph of nature over art; for they had been cut from a bush in the old Seaboro cemetery less than an hour ago, and their stems were packed in wet moss, which filled the bonnet's spacious crown. "It keeps the head cool, and works harm to no one," Serepta Hanscom graciously explained to herself—the one person to whom she felt explanation of her conduct due. "It always did seem to me a little tawdry to adorn oneself with imitation when the real was close at hand." No one throughout the three counties of which she counted herself a resident would ever have thought of calling Serepta Hanscom a tramp. Yet her home was wherever the night found her, and her worldly possessions were packed in the two old-fashioned valises which she

carried by her side, as she roamed about the country at the happy dictates of her own fancy. Just what her origin and early history had been no one knew, and in the score of years which had passed since she first appeared among them, the coast people had quite forgotten to wonder. Her speech was that of an educated person, her manner reflected the precise elegance of the old-time seminary, but beyond certain mysterious hints of a luxurious past and high connections, Serepta Hanscom never explained herself. The coldest of the winter months were usually spent in some comfortable farmhouse, where her skillful fingers and fertile brain made her a welcome guest; but with the first coming of spring her restless feet were upon the highway once more.

It was a leisurely road which she followed this summer morning; wild roses and bay leaves mingled their fragrance by the wayside, and the breath of the sea crept through the low fir trees. There were long pauses in well-remembered nooks, for the road from Seaboro to Rocky Cove was an old favorite with Miss Hanscom; and from more than one cottage upon the way there sounded a friendly greeting which detained her for a brief chat. It was noontime when she reached the hilltop where an opening in the trees gave a first glimpse of the wide bay. Serepta drew a deep breath of satisfaction. "I never shall winter so far inland again," she decided.

Halfway down the hill a white schoolhouse found place among the blackberry bushes, and upon its doorstep a youth and maiden sat. Serepta hastily changed her glasses.

"Squire Wellfleet's Ralph and Mary Cullom's Annie," she decided, thinking aloud, as was her wont. "Dear, dear, it was *only* yesterday I helped his mother cut off his baby curls; and not longer than last week that Mary Mansfield ran away from school to marry Silas Cullom." She retraced her steps a little and ate her simple lunch beside the stone wall quite out of sight and hearing of the little schoolhouse. Then, removing her bonnet, she thoughtfully retimmed it. "Roses are pretty for morning, but yarrow and violets seem more appropriate for afternoon," she said, as she lifted her valises again.

The pair upon the schoolhouse step had risen now, for children's returning voices sounded shrilly in the distance, and the young teacher's leisure hour was over. There was a flush upon her smooth cheek, and the young man's face was full of disappointment. Serepta walked more slowly. "Dear, dear, it never did run smooth," she said to herself as she came nearer, watching the pair with troubled face.

"So you mean to make me unhappy because my father and mother are unjust to you, Annie," the young man said, reproachfully.

"You might as well be unhappy from that cause as another," the girl replied, resolutely. "I can never marry you unless they are willing."

"Ahem!" coughed Serepta. The teacher disappeared inside the building, and the young man came toward the traveler, lifting his hat.

"Aunt Serepta, I declare!" he said, cordially. "I can't remember when I saw you last. Here, let me take your valises; I'm stronger than when I used to tease to see what was in them."

Serepta dropped a deep courtesy. She was not accustomed to receive deference from the young men whom she encountered, and usually avoided their society lest she encounter open ridicule.

"Thank you kindly, sir," she said, as she yielded the heaviest valise.

"You're going to our house, of course?" he continued.

Serepta hesitated. "Not this time," she said at last. "I was there the last time I came to Rocky Cove—you were away at college. I stayed a week, and Emily Pease and some others felt slighted. I must make it up to them this time. I only have two days to spare, for I must get back to Seaboro for Captain Robert's golden wedding. They wouldn't take no for an answer." One of Serepta's greatest resources was her firm belief in the welcome which awaited her at every house.

Three hours later, her gray cape removed and her bonnet exchanged for a lace cap, Miss Hanscom moved about a spacious kitchen of Rocky Cove, brewing for herself a cup of "afternoon tea" in a china teapot, which was her inseparable companion. Her hostess declined to share the beverage, with the assurance that she never "ate between meals," but was not averse, as it proved, to a friendly gossip over the one cup.

This was Serepta's first visit to the little village for the year, and even a homeless wayfarer may be a good listener. The deaths and marryings of a twelvemonth, the winter's fishing and the new church supply had been exhausted, and Mrs. Pease leaned thoughtfully back in her chair in search of a fresh topic. "Squire Wellfleet's folks are in a great takin' about Ralph," she announced. Serepta was deeply interested, as her reply betrayed. "You don't tell me?" she remarked, dropping naturally into the vernacular of the countryside. Mrs. Pease looked gratified. All previous announcements had elicited from her guest only a calm and eminently correct "Indeed."

"They've always held their heads high and planned for Ralph to marry accordingly," continued Mrs. Pease. "But he's keeping company with Annie Cullom for all they can say or do. Mis' Wellfleet and the squire are dreadful worked up. Of course, Annie's a good little girl, but Si Cullom wasn't nothing but a lobsterman, though I

suppose he's in heaven now, all the same. And Mary's folks turning the cold shoulder to her kind of kept them down. I always thought they might have come around after Si got drowned,

lar, Mrs. Pease, but you may have heard that I am not of your nationality. My great-grandfather was an English duke."

"So I've been told," Mrs. Pease re-



Halfway down the hill stood a white schoolhouse.

but Mary died so soon after, it hardly give 'em time. I guess the old lady's a good deal influenced by her sons. Funny how they stay away and let that handsome place go to ruin, ain't it?"

Serepta rose to carry her cup and saucer to the sink; her interest seemed to have departed. "Seems to me your crimson Rambler is blossoming early," she said, politely. "Could you spare me a cluster? I expect to stop at Mrs. Captain Collier's to-night, and she is so likely to have city company at this season. They might consider the yarrow on my bonnet an offense to good taste. I dare say you think me over particu-

plied, reverently. "Your father was a younger son, wasn't he?"

"The younger son of a younger son," explained the scion of nobility, proudly. "My grandfather was cast off by his family for making what they considered a *mésalliance*—my grandmother was a relative—many times removed—of the wandering Jew. To her blood I attribute my love for roving."

"Do tell!" exclaimed Mrs. Pease, in unfeigned admiration.

Serepta gently repacked her china and her tiny tea chest. "I am greatly indebted for the roses," she declared. "By the way, speaking of the Mansfields, have you heard that madame was

coming back for a time? Well, I dare say it is only a rumor. A bird of passage, like myself, hears all sorts of stories. Do you think the roses look best clustered or spread apart?"

The old stone house, built by the earliest of the Mansfields a full century before, had been for a quarter of that time gradually falling out of repair, and its lawns were long since a tangled wilderness. The news that its owner was about to return spread swiftly throughout the little village of Rocky Cove, and careful watch was set upon the highway along which the Mansfield carriage and pair had taken their last departure, fully twenty years ago. No one thought of the water as a thoroughfare, or remembered the fabulous price which Madame Mansfield's oldest son had been reported to have paid for a steam yacht a few years since. But it came about that on a July morning, after a threatening night which left the little harbor full of vessels, smoke was seen rising from the wide chimneys of the old house, and a manservant with a rusty ax made determined attacks upon the tangle of shrubbery which obstructed the avenue to the front porch. Later in the day an elderly woman in plaid shawl and gingham sunbonnet came forth from the iron gate with a huge basket on her arm, and sought the village store.

"She bought free, but not what you'd call lavish," Silas Stetson, postmaster, grocer and general dealer, announced. "Old Mis' Mansfield never was what you'd call extravagant, though in the cap'n's time they lived well. The woman says the old lady's aged some. She said she didn't know how long they was goin' to stay, and she said the boys wa'n't comin' at present. That was about all I got. She's kind of close-mouthed, I guess. She speaks kind of like a foreigner, and her grammar's dreadful poor. I couldn't find out how they come. I asked about the hosses, and she said the old lady never went out, so she hadn't no use for such. I guess she's jest come back to die in the old place. Old Mis' Mansfield always did set peace and comfort a long ways

ahead of style. I wonder how Squire Willet's folks'll take her comin' back. I 'spose 'taint liable to make much difference to Annie."

It was a week later that Rocky Cove first succeeded in opening communication with the mistress of the Mansfield estate. A few old acquaintances had called, only to be told by the elderly maidservant that Madame Mansfield was unable to see them, and the village was forced to await her recovery. The manservant, having cleared the paths and made such repairs as were necessary to render the place habitable, had disappeared, and his place, after some delay, was filled by an elderly colored man, whose duties seemed to be chiefly indoors, so that Rocky Cove caught only rare glimpses of him. On a sunny morning the old man came down the main street of the village, his shrunken figure clad in a broadcloth suit which the late Captain Mansfield, much against his own inclination, had been persuaded to purchase for his youngest son's wedding. Rocky Cove recognized the suit with the correct vision of a community to which dress suits are rare. "Mis' Mansfield must set a lot by that nigger to rig him up in the cap'n's weddin' clothes," objected Silas Stetson.

"Like as anyway, she don't know he's got 'em," suggested a customer, as he leaned from the doorway to watch the old man make a leisurely tour of the street, stopping to inquire his way of every passer-by.

In less than half an hour Mrs. Squire Wellfleet might have been seen hurrying down the street to the dusty office where her husband transacted the law business of Rocky Cove. "Just read this, Henry, for mercy sakes," she urged, excitedly. The lawyer held the dainty note from him at arm's length. It was written in the delicate hand of a long past generation.

"Madame Mansfield will be at home to her friends on Saturday at three o'clock. It will give her much pleasure to receive Mrs. Willet and present her granddaughter, Miss Annie Mansfield Cullom."



The granddaughter served the guests with cake and ambrosia.

Squire Willett returned the note to his wife, who confronted him, helplessly. "Well, what are we going to do now?" she demanded. "I don't know very much about the ways of city society, but common sense tells me that to go smiling up there dressed in my best clothes to be introduced to that girl is just the same as saying Ralph can marry her if he wants to. And not to go—dear me, she's sent invitations to all the best houses in town, and I don't dare slight it. If the Mansfields are coming back to Rocky Cove we must keep in with them."

Squire Wellfleet considered.

"I am not aware," he said, with dignity, "that I have ever objected to my son offering attention to a granddaughter of Madame Mansfield. And I have often assured you, Marcella, that the young woman—lady is well enough in herself. It is of vast importance to me whether the mother of my future grandsons is a recognized member of the Mansfield family or must depend for family connections upon the Culloms, no one of whom, save Silas, ever owned a dory in his life." Mrs. Wellfleet gave

a sigh of relief. "I'm sure I'm glad it's turning out that way," she declared. "I've begun to see 'twas little use trying to cross Ralph now, after giving him his own way for twenty-three years. How much do you suppose old Mrs. Mansfield is worth, Henry?"

"Not a penny in her own right," replied Squire Wellfleet, grimly. "The old cap'n must have foreseen something of this sort, for he left her nothing but a life interest. Everything goes to the boys. But that is neither here nor there, Marcella. The Wellfleets are far above the snobbery which demands wealth. Cap'n Mansfield's granddaughter would doubtless be regarded by her uncles as being quite as far above our son as Seth Cullom's descendant has seemed to us beneath him. I guess we'd better strike an average, Marcella, and let the boy have his way."

Later in the day the aged colored man delivered his last note at the little schoolhouse. The young teacher read it with rising color and mingled emotions. "The rightful place of Madame Mansfield's granddaughter in her mother's early home will await her on Saturday at

2 P. M." There was neither address nor signature, and Annie Cullom wistfully studied the note for any sentiment of affection or cordiality. She immediately determined not to go, and her lover, who was waiting when school was out, strongly commended her decision.

"My future wife doesn't need the belated patronage of any wealthy relatives," he declared. "No doubt they would think you far too good for me." It was at that moment that Annie's determination first wavered.

"I don't quite know what is best," she said, thoughtfully.

Promptly at the appointed hour she stood upon the crumbling ancestral porch, looking her prettiest in a fresh muslin dress with many lace-trimmed ruffles, which represented long hours of evening labor. There had been a time when she looked forward to wearing it upon her wedding day, but that was before rumor brought to her ears the story of the Wellfleet disapproval. Now, as she stood waiting an answer to her knock, there seemed wonderful possibilities waiting behind that closed door.

"I'm glad I came," she sighed, happily, before she had crossed the threshold.

The aged colored man admitted her to a darkened parlor, where moth-eaten tapestries testified of long neglect, and curious treasures, brought by dead and gone Mansfields from foreign lands, covered shelves and tables. There was an interval of waiting, then the maid-servant, in ruffled cap and huge white apron, appeared in the doorway with a subdued request that the young lady "lay off her hat and make herself to home." Another long silence succeeded her departure, broken at last by the sound of a cane upon the uncarpeted stairs. Annie Cullom reproached herself for the lack of emotion with which she arose to greet her hostess. The bent figure in its trailing robe of green silk was full of dignity, though plainly dependent upon the stout cane. A marvelous headdress of real lace surmounted the white curls which hung in clusters above each ear, and the keen eyes looked upon the guest from behind blue

spectacles with heavy frames of gold. As she extended a hand in greeting, the girl noticed that it was very white and adorned with many rings. "Miss Cullom, I presume," she remarked, as she motioned the guest to a chair. "I am glad to see that you favor your mother's side of the house." All the girl's carefully prepared speeches forsook her memory. "Yes, ma'am," she said, helplessly.

There was an awkward silence, broken by footsteps upon the porch outside. "Let me go," the girl said, impulsively, as her hostess rose. The old lady made a forbidding gesture. "Certainly not, my dear," she replied. "I will ring for Ebenezer." Repeated rings, however, failed to make any impression upon Ebenezer, and madame turned helplessly to her guest. "I shall have to permit you, child," she said, regretfully. "Martha is indisposed this afternoon, and I do not like to disturb her. After all, what more appropriate than that a daughter of the house first open these long closed doors to its guests."

The guests came in a body, and no one who had been invited was wanting. The hostess, leaning upon her cane, received them graciously, though with manifest condescension, and introduced each one with impressive ceremony to "the only granddaughter of the house," whom all present had known from babyhood. Yet each one seemed to view the girl with new vision as she moved about the spacious rooms upon madame's many behests.

"Quite to the manor born," quoted Seraphina Briggs, the village poetess. The minister, to whose dreamy life little of Rocky Cove gossip ever penetrated, leaned toward Mrs. Wellfleet. "Am I premature in congratulations?" he asked. "I think I have understood that your son——"

It was Mrs. Wellfleet's opportunity to set matters right at a single stroke. "Oh, yes, it is well understood among our friends that Ralph has chosen a daughter for us," she said, graciously, with a fond glance in Annie's direction as the girl left the room in search of

Ebenezer. The aged hostess had noted both words and glance, and an expression of disapproval crossed her face. She turned to the squire's lady. "May I ask for an explanation, madam?" she said, politely. "Did I understand that Miss Cullom has already formed an attachment for some young man? That would, indeed, be a matter of deep regret. I trust I misunderstood you." Mrs. Wellfleet explained humbly. "They grew up together," she urged, "and have been devoted friends from childhood." She suddenly forgot all her own opposition in her eagerness to combat that of her hostess. Madame shook her head. "I do not approve of these youthful attachments," she declared, severely. "I shall wish to inquire very closely into the young man's character and antecedents. A granddaughter of this house may well look higher than the son of a country lawyer. Pardon me, do I understand it is your son? Well, in that case, I trust you will join me in persuading the young people to reconsider it." Mrs. Wellfleet gasped. "Oh, I could not think of doing so," she replied. "My son's happiness is at stake."

The granddaughter of the house returned from a vain quest, and in the continued absence of Ebenezer, served the guests with fruit cake and ambrosia, which had been long since made ready in the long dining room. It was she who accompanied each guest departing to the door, and received their compliments upon the beauty of the old place. Mrs. Wellfleet, suddenly apprehensive for her son's future happiness, lingered until the last. "Will you give me a rose for Ralph, my dear?" she asked, as she stood beside the vine-covered pillars of the old porch. No thought of resentment lingered in the girl's mind as she reached above her head to secure a creamy blossom more perfect than the rest. "Oh, yes, indeed," she said.

She went back to the parlor, hoping for a more perfect understanding with her hostess, whom she had not as yet ventured to address by a more familiar title than "madame." The old lady had risen, and was making a slow but dignified exit from the room.

"I think I had better be going," the girl said, doubtfully.

"Don't be in a hurry," urged madame, politely.

Annie put on her hat before the long mirror in the hall. "I've had a lovely afternoon," she said, shyly.

"It has been a mutual pleasure," replied madame, without enthusiasm. "The more so that this is your proper and rightful place. You must become fully acquainted with the old place, and I should like to have you come every afternoon as soon as school is over, and remain until evening. I may not often be able to receive you in person, but Martha and Ebenezer will see that you have every attention. And"—she paused a moment to look searchingly into the girl's face—"was there a young man whom I heard mentioned? Pardon an old woman's interest in youth, my dear—I should be glad if he came, too, sometimes. It is a long time since these old gardens have been honored with lovers' confidences." There was no hint of the disapproval which had sent Mrs. Wellfleet away troubled, and Annie Cullom walked down the shadowy avenue light-hearted.

"It isn't at all like what I supposed a grandmother would be," she reflected. "It is far more like having a fairy godmother, who smooths out all the tangles in life and gives you everything you want in a wholly impersonal way."

So it came about that on each succeeding summer afternoon the interested eyes of Rocky Cove beheld Madame Mansfield's granddaughter enter the rusty iron gates of her mother's early home. The likeness to a fairy godmother deepened, for, after that first Saturday, the mistress of the house was invisible. Always Ebenezer or Martha admitted the guest, and later served a dainty tea from a table spread with heavy damask and set with rare china. And each evening before she took her departure Martha came down with a mysterious package from her mistress; once it contained a string of pearls, again a length of rich lace—always some relic of olden time. Martha also accompanied her home on the first

evening, but after that there was always Ralph, who liked to spend long, twilight hours in helping her explore the old house and gardens. Sometimes a face surmounted by a lace headdress looked down upon them from an upper window, but Madame Mansfield never appeared in person.

"Mother wants you to come over to tea, Wednesday," Ralph said, a little awkwardly, as they stood one evening beside a ruined fountain. "She thought we might have a little engagement party after. She and father both think we needn't wait longer than October." He paused a moment, to continue in an apologetic tone: "You mustn't think it is all on account of your grandmother, Annie. You see, they didn't really know you before." And Annie generously responded: "Oh, that's all right."

The engagement party was duly celebrated, and Mrs. Wellfleet, with satisfied manner, presented her future daughter to all of Rocky Cove and half of Seaboro. Only Madame Mansfield sent a stiffly worded note of regrets. Mrs. Wellfleet drew a long breath of relief when the evening was over. "She can't very well make any objections now," she assured her husband. "I've been fearful ever since I saw her that she'd got higher plans for the girl."

"Even Madame Mansfield's granddaughter might do worse," declared Squire Wellfleet, with a satisfied glance at his stalwart son.

It was less than a week later that a long procession of hired teams from Pegasset, the nearest railway center, preceded by the Pegasset hearse, wound slowly through the streets of Rocky Cove to the village cemetery; and all the little village was electrified by the announcement which spread from house to house and sounded through the narrow streets: "It's the Mansfield family come back to bury the old lady. They say she's been paralyzed and helpless for ten months, and scarcely known the folks that took care of her."

A delegation of puzzled citizens set forth to seek an explanation from the inhabitants of the old Mansfield house, only to find it closed and tenantless once

more. The rusty iron gate was locked against all intruders. But for the cleared avenue to the front porch, and the scattered rose petals upon the lawn, where only last evening the lovers had fought a mimic battle with roses as weapons, the whole story of the old house's occupation might have been a dream.

"I don't know's it makes any difference," Mrs. Wellfleet declared, crisply, to those of her neighbors who ventured to ask her sentiments upon the day's revelations. "Annie's clear Mansfield, as all Rocky Cove has been eager to discover in the last six weeks, and I, for one, shan't be sorry to have my son and his wife to myself without constant interferin' from those that thinks themselves better than other folks. No, I'm not a mite superstitious, and I can't say I fully agree with those who think the old lady's spirit's been back here tryin' to rectify its mistakes, while her body's been lyin' helpless and scarce breathin' down there in the city. Still, I'm not prepared to say somebody's got to be wrong in these matters, and it may be me. There's many more unjust things happens than that a repenting soul on the borders of the other world should be given a chance to set things right again. And I'd like to have you tell me one thing; if it wasn't Madame Mansfield herself, who was it?"

Annie Cullom, with the gifts she had received at the Mansfield house, waited upon Madame Mansfield's eldest son at the little village hotel next morning. The gentleman surveyed her thoughtfully as he listened to her story; it had already reached his ears in various forms.

"Keep the trinkets, child," he said, kindly. "I don't imagine there is anyone living who could tell whether they belong in the old house or not. Nearly everything of value must have been carried away from there years ago. I am about to sell the place—Squire Wellfleet wishes to buy it for his son's occupancy—and I have been a little uncertain as to the contents. Neither my brother nor myself, as it happens, are men of sentiment, yet, however matter-

of-fact a man may be, he hardly likes to sell the things his ancestors have prized. It would really relieve my perplexity if you would accept whatever family properties remain in the house. There's no particular use in going into family matters which happened before you were born and which I scarce remember. Only—I don't know who these people were or what the object of their masquerading has been—but I don't believe there is any harm done by it, after all. I presume Squire Wellfleet would like the house cleared at once; shall I give orders for its removal?"

Annie hesitated. "If the house is for his son," she said, shyly, "there will be no need for moving the things. Because, you see, he has only one son—and I——" her rising color told the rest.

Robert Mansfield's heart, calloused by years of selfish pursuits, stirred a little. His elder sister was only a far-off memory of his childhood, but the girl before him was of his own blood.

"Well, well," he said, "I believed I was selling the old place without a shadow of regret, but I find it gives me a sense of satisfaction, after all, to know that it is not going out of the family. You must let me know when the wedding day is set."

On the morning of October 5th, Serepta Hanscom, with her two valises, walked briskly up the graveled path to Mrs. Wellfleet's back door. Purple frost flowers and brilliant thorn berries adorned her bonnet, but she carried in her hand a late flowering monthly rose. "I shall wish to retrim my bonnet before the wedding hour," she explained. Serepta was never an unwelcome guest in a busy household, and Mrs. Wellfleet, overburdened with many duties on this all-important day, gladly accepted her

offer of assistance. But to-day Serepta's swift needle lagged unaccountably, and her usual ready suggestions for household problems were not forthcoming.

"I suppose you heard all about the Mansfield mystery," Mrs. Wellfleet sug-



"Mother wants you to come over to tea Wednesday."

gested. "Didn't it beat everything? I guess it begun to be pretty generally accepted that there was something kind of ghostly about it. But I don't suppose the real facts will ever be known."

Serepta laid down the lace ruffle she was carefully plaiting. "I have a communication to make," she said, desperately, yet with her usual careful choice of language. "I meant to keep it until after the wedding, but it is weighing on my mind to such an extent I shan't enjoy the services unless I speak." Her

hostess regarded her with perplexed face. "Well," she said, inquiringly.

"I was Madame Mansfield," confessed Serepta. Mrs. Wellfleet's amazement far outweighed her indignation.

"For the land sake," she said, helplessly. "How'd you ever come to do such a thing, Serepty, and how'd you ever dare?" Serepta took up her ruffle again.

"I never could bear to sit and see things go wrong, when a little managing would set them right," she explained. "And I thought it would do Rocky Cove good to be reminded that blood is blood. As for daring, there is surely no presumption in a great-granddaughter of a duke representing a sea captain's widow. I shouldn't want it to get out among the church people, Mrs. Wellfleet, but I was a play actor in my youth."

Mrs. Wellfleet looked impressed. "I've often heard it said there was something mysterious in your past," she admitted. "But even then I don't see how you managed, Serepta. There was all that hired help, and the expense of keeping them."

For the first time Serepta betrayed embarrassment.

"The expense was very little, after all," she said, slowly. "For there wasn't so much help as there appeared to be. I was the hired woman."

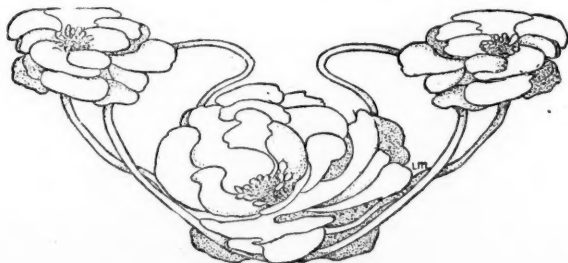
She hesitated, looking nervously about the room. Then dropping her voice to a whisper, she continued: "I

was the hired man that cut the bushes. I was—Mrs. Wellfleet, if you ever dare to mention it in Rocky Cove, I will declare it a base fabrication—but I was the—it was I that was the colored man. That is all I regret. To think the great-granddaughter of an English duke could so far forget her maiden modesty as to walk the streets in men's attire. The rest of it was easily accomplished. I was always a born contriver, you know."

Mrs. Wellfleet hesitated, a prey to various conflicting emotions, as she strove to recall the events and conversation of that afternoon at the Mansfield house.

"Well," she said, in a half-offended tone, "I'm glad to have the mystery cleared up. It has troubled Annie more than a little. I don't know as you'd better advertise it outside the family. Walk-in' round in men's clothes and lamp-black on your face is kind of bold, and it might lose friends for you. Otherwise, I can't see as there's a mite of harm done! As you've hinted out, there was those who used to look down on Annie, and it's done them good to find she wasn't a nobody, after all, if her mother did marry beneath her. I guess when they come to see a hundred-dollar check from her uncles among the wedding gifts, they'll decide she's part Mansfield, after all."

Serepta laid aside the completed ruffle. "I believe I will retrim my bonnet now," she said.



THE AMATEUR STAGE

Conducted by Arthur Dudley Hall

The number of people throughout the country who are attracted toward the stage and all that pertains to theatrical life is so large that we believe much interest will be taken in a series of articles dealing exclusively with this subject in all its branches. We invite communications from our readers asking for any theatrical information they may desire, and we will do our best to answer these questions satisfactorily in these pages. We refer not only to questions concerning the professional stage and those who appear upon it, but **especially** do we desire to be of service to amateurs, and will cheerfully give hints as to the selection of plays for private theatricals, the casting of the same, the scenery, the costumes, and in fact any point that may puzzle or interest the aspirant for histrionic honors. In this connection, we shall publish from time to time, a little original play, which, while the professional rights are reserved, will be open to representation by such amateurs as care to perform it, and will apply for written permission. The first of these is given below. The aspiring playwright will not be neglected in this department. There are many writers who have ideas, but do not know how to put them into proper shape, because they have no practical knowledge of the stage and its requirements. We hope to be of assistance to these embryo dramatists by pointing out to them what to do and particularly what to avoid. The next issue will contain a short essay on this subject.

WINNING A WIDOW

CHARACTERS:

TOM HARDY. MRS. MADGE FALCONER.

SCENE: Mrs. Falconer's boudoir. Prettily furnished apartment. Door at back, leading into hall. Door left. Door right, small, supposed to open into coal closet. Window. Dressing table, with toilet articles. Table, with tea samovar and workbasket. Another table, covered with a white cloth, on which stands a vase of flowers. At center, up stage, pedestal with bust, supposed to represent the late Mr. Falconer. Enter Hardy, at back.

HARDY (*speaking off*)—Take my card to Mrs. Falconer, please. (*Entering.*) I'm an ass to persist in coming here, a regular moth about the flame, and I'm bound to be singed some day. Upon my word, it is simply ridiculous the way she persists in keeping up her mourning, dragging in the dear departed on every possible occasion. Why,

the last time I dined here, she suddenly remembered that Perez—that was his name (*with disgust*)—Perez!—that Perez adored lobster à la Newburgh, and consequently she burst into tears. It would do very well the day after the funeral, or even for a week, but a year—a year! Yes, it is over a year since he was killed in that mine in Arizona, and his body never recovered. If I didn't love her—but the devil of it is, I do love her, and she knows it, too! (*Laughing.*) By Jove! she ought to, I've told her so every day for the last three months. I don't know why she won't have me. I'm not bad looking. (*Glancing at bust.*) Well, he was no beauty. But it's no use. She persists in her obstinate mourning, talking of nothing but her dear Perez and his virtues. (*Turning and apostrophizing bust.*) Your virtues! Do you remember the times over and over again that

you drank so much you were paralyzed and had to be taken home in a cab with your feet hanging out of the window? Do you remember when Totty Toes-in-the-Air— But, perhaps, you would not like to have that little episode with Totty recalled. It wasn't quite proper. Well, you are a living example. No, thank Heaven, not a living example, but a dead example—that a man has only to go the pace during life to be canonized as a saint afterward. A saint! You, Perez Falconer, a saint! Ha! ha! ha! (*Enter Mrs. Falconer, left. She sees Hardy and looks shocked.*)

MRS. FALCONER—Oh, don't! Don't laugh!

HARDY (*turning, preternaturally grave*)—I beg your pardon. I didn't hear you come in.

MRS. FALCONER—It is terrible to laugh in this house of mourning.

HARDY—Good gracious, Madge, I can't always keep a long face, as if I'd eaten something that disagreed with me.

MRS. FALCONER (*sighing*)—You are right. Desolate, I pursue my gloomy way. I must mourn alone.

HARDY—Nonsense! Why can't we be jolly together?

MRS. FALCONER—Oh, don't! Don't say such things before him.

HARDY (*jumping and looking around*)—Him! Before what him? What do you mean?

MRS. FALCONER (*pointing to bust*)—Before him!

HARDY (*relieved*)—Oh, good gracious, I thought it was somebody who could hear.

MRS. FALCONER—I hope he does hear everything.

HARDY (*aside*)—I hope he don't.

MRS. FALCONER (*going to bust*)—Isn't it beautiful? But it can't compare with the original.

HARDY—Nothing could.

MRS. FALCONER (*with sad effusiveness*)—Oh, thank you! Thank you!

HARDY (*aside*)—Humph! I didn't mean it in that way.

MRS. FALCONER—Do you think it like him?

HARDY (*surveying bust, critically*)—

Well, it's got more hair than he had, and it doesn't squint so much.

MRS. FALCONER (*indignantly*)—Squint! Oh, Perez! (*Turning to Hardy.*) Tom Hardy, you have no right to make such insulting remarks.

HARDY (*doggedly*)—He *did* squint.

MRS. FALCONER—Hush! It is sacrilege! You think yourself privileged, because we played together as children.

HARDY—Pretending to be man and wife. Do you remember?

MRS. FALCONER—No, I don't remember. Or, if I do, I want to forget. (*Sits and takes embroidery from basket.*) Won't you sit down?

HARDY—May I sit on your right hand?

MRS. FALCONER—Why, of course not. You'd better take a chair. (*Half smiles, and then becomes grave.*)

HARDY (*aside*)—Holloa! That's more like her old self. (*Sits, aloud.*) Madge, you ought to go out more. You stay in the house too much.

MRS. FALCONER—If you were I, how would you occupy yourself?

HARDY (*moving nearer*)—By looking into the mirror, I think.

MRS. FALCONER (*moving away, but showing that she appreciates the compliment*)—I haven't seen you for two days. Where have you been?

HARDY—In Boston.

MRS. FALCONER (*very excitedly*)—Boston!

HARDY (*starting*)—Yes. Why?

MRS. FALCONER—He was born in Boston. (*Weeps.*)

HARDY (*suddenly*)—Good heavens, Madge, are you going to keep this up forever?

MRS. FALCONER—Keep what up?

HARDY—Why, that woe-begone face, those widow's weeds. You've worn that dress, or one like it, ever since—

MRS. FALCONER (*interrupting*)—And I shall continue to wear this dress, or one like it, always. How can you understand my grief? You don't know what it is to lose a husband, and *such* a husband.

HARDY (*explosively*)—No, I *don't*!

MRS. FALCONER—He had no secrets from me.

HARDY (*aside*)—Oh, hadn't he? Totty Toes-in-the-Air!

MRS. FALCONER—He used to tell me all he knew.

HARDY—The silence must have been oppressive. (*Pause.*) I say, Madge, were you so awfully happy with him?

MRS. FALCONER (*startled and hesitating*)—I—I—(*With apologetic glance at bust.*) Oh, Perez! (*To Hardy with decision.*) Why, of course I was. It was a love match. Love matches always turn out happily. Did you ever know a single instance where they have not done so?

HARDY—No, not of a single instance. But I know of a good many married ones.

MRS. FALCONER (*sarcastically*)—Oh, how clever of you! Where did you get that idea?

HARDY—Out of my head.

MRS. FALCONER—Well, you must be glad it's out. (*Suddenly and emphatically.*) Of course, I was happy.

HARDY—Well, you know best. Look here, Madge, really, why did you ever marry Falconer?

MRS. FALCONER—Because I loved him, of course. And then—and then he threatened to commit suicide.

HARDY—You shouldn't have interfered with his fancies.

MRS. FALCONER—Tom! (*To bust.*) Oh, Perez!

HARDY (*exasperated*)—Oh, I'm tired of this! Madge, you persist in hugging your grief. Other women—

MRS. FALCONER—But I'm not like other women. Women, generally speaking—

HARDY—Yes, they are.

MRS. FALCONER—What?

HARDY—Generally speaking.

MRS. FALCONER (*half laughing*)—Well, let other women alone.

HARDY—I do. You are the only woman I want.

MRS. FALCONER (*pointing to bust*)—Hush! I am *his* widow. (*Pointing to bust.*)

HARDY—That needn't stop your being my wife.

MRS. FALCONER—Oh!

HARDY—I fell in love with you at first sight.

MRS. FALCONER—It was a pity you were not gifted with second sight.

HARDY—When you were engaged to Falconer, I thought I was going to have brain fever.

MRS. FALCONER—Oh, you needn't have been afraid of that. You could never have had it in anything but a mild form, you know.

HARDY—Well, it's no use. Men are but fools.

MRS. FALCONER—You are quite right—they are.

HARDY—Especially with women.

MRS. FALCONER—Especially with women. (*After a pause.*) I see I must be serious with you.

HARDY—If you only would.

MRS. FALCONER—I shall not deny myself the pleasure of seeing you, for it is a very great pleasure. But I want it to be understood that you are never to speak to me of—

HARDY—Of marriage?

MRS. FALCONER—Yes.

HARDY—But what are we to talk about then?

MRS. FALCONER—Why, of everything else, of course. Well, do you promise?

HARDY—But—

MRS. FALCONER—Do you or do you not promise? I will not see you except on that condition.

HARDY—Oh, I promise! I promise!

MRS. FALCONER—And we shall be much happier. After all, Tom, there is nothing so beautiful as friendship.

HARDY (*funereally*)—No, nothing.

MRS. FALCONER—There, now, that's settled and you're good, what shall I do to reward you? Shall I play something for you?

HARDY—Yes, do. I haven't heard you play since—since—oh, well, for some time. (*Mrs. Falconer sits down to piano, and plays a dirge.*)

HARDY (*aside*)—Damn! (*Pause, aloud.*) I say, Madge.

MRS. FALCONER (*turning her head*)—Well?

HARDY—Do you remember that dance we went to at Mrs. Austin's?

MRS. FALCONER—Yes.

HARDY—It was then I first told you that I loved you.

MRS. FALCONER—Take care!

HARDY (*quickly*)—Oh, I'm not telling you so now. You had on a pink dress.

MRS. FALCONER (*interested*)—All covered with roses and lace.

HARDY—Yes, and you looked like a rose in it.

MRS. FALCONER (*dreamily*)—I've got that dress now.

HARDY—And then that waltz we had after supper. (*Mrs. Falconer, unconsciously, changes the music to a waltz. Hardy smiles, and nods his head approvingly to himself.*)

HARDY—Oh, how happy I was! I would like to waltz with you now. (*Mrs. Falconer, startled and recalled to herself, stops waltz.*)

MRS. FALCONER—Oh, Perez! (*She returns to the dirge. Hardy shows disgust.*)

HARDY (*after a moment*)—And then that little vaudeville performance, where you did a song and dance. It was something like this. (*Mrs. Falconer wheels round on piano stool. Hardy imitates song and dance.*)

MRS. FALCONER—No, no! That isn't a bit like it!

HARDY—Why, yes, it is. (*Tries again.*)

MRS. FALCONER (*rising*)—No, no! This was it. (*She sings a line or two, and dances a few steps.*)

HARDY (*enthusiastically*)—Bravo!

MRS. FALCONER (*remembering herself*)—What have I done? (*Going to bust.*) Oh, forgive me! Oh, Perez! (*Throws her arms about bust.*)

HARDY—Damn Perez!

MRS. FALCONER (*reproachfully to Hardy*)—Oh, how could you? You have made me almost forget him twice.

HARDY—I wish I could make you forget him forever. But he's like a phoenix.

MRS. FALCONER—A phoenix?

HARDY—Always rising out of the flames.

MRS. FALCONER (*indignantly*)—What has Perez to do with flames?

HARDY—Well, I hope they haven't

got anything to do with him just now, but I wouldn't gamble on it.

MRS. FALCONER—For shame!

HARDY (*repentantly*)—Don't be angry! Please, ma'am, I'll be good!

MRS. FALCONER (*laughing in spite of herself*)—What a donkey you are! But will you do something for me?

HARDY—Of course.

MRS. FALCONER—I want you to help me go over those bills of my husband's.

HARDY—Now, Madge, surely you don't intend to pay all those debts, large and small? It is simply another form of exaggeration which your—ahem!—sorrow has taken, and which you ought not to encourage.

MRS. FALCONER (*looking tenderly at bust, and pointing to it*)—He would have done the same for me.

HARDY (*doubtfully*)—Well, perhaps he would. But that's no reason why—

MRS. FALCONER—I consider it a sufficient reason why I should do the same for him.

HARDY—Oh, very well: Of course you'll have your own way.

MRS. FALCONER—I generally do. I'll bring the bills, and then you'll help me with them, won't you?

HARDY (*sulkily*)—Whenever you ask me to do anything, don't I always go and do it like an idiot?

MRS. FALCONER (*at door*)—Yes, you always go and do it—like an idiot. (*Exit Mrs. Falconer, left.*)

(*Hardy goes up to bust, shakes his fist at it, and threatens it.*)

HARDY—If it wasn't for you always mixing yourself up in business that don't concern you, I believe I could get her. But you're always hanging round and never know when your company isn't wanted. If I could only get rid of you! (*As if struck by a sudden idea.*) By Jove, why not? I'll do it! (*He takes bust from pedestal and puts it in closet, right, slamming the door.*) There! Stay there until you're black in the face.

MRS. FALCONER (*outside*)—I'll be there in a minute, Tom.

HARDY (*frightened*)—Oh, Lord,

what'll she say? I wish I hadn't done it. (*Tries door of closet.*) Confound it, it's a spring lock!

MRS. FALCONER (*outside*)—I've mislaid one of the bills.

HARDY—I don't dare to face her without that bust. I'll have to gain time and fake it somehow. (*He takes white cloth from table and wraps it about his shoulders. Then goes to work-basket and fixes cotton wool on his head to imitate hair. Powders his face from box on toilet table.*)

MRS. FALCONER (*outside*)—Oh, here it is! (*Hardy hurries to pedestal and places himself behind it, assuming pose of bust.*)

HARDY—I wonder if I look like him. I hope I've got the squint. (*Enter Mrs. Falconer, with jewel box and packet of bills.*)

MRS. FALCONER—Here they are, Tom. (*Looking round in amazement.*) Why, he's gone! How rude of him! (*Puts down case and bills on table.*) I wonder if I was too hard on him. Poor fellow! I believe he really does love me.

HARDY (*sotto voce*)—You bet your life!

MRS. FALCONER (*starting*)—What's that? How odd! I thought I heard somebody speak. (*Reflectively.*) Poor Tom! I really am very fond of him. (*Hardy grins. Mrs. Falconer turns and looks at him, and he assumes his former expression.*) But no, no, I will never be false to you, Perez. (*Goes to samovar and pours out cup of tea.*) But what could have taken Tom off? No matter. He'll be back again tomorrow. He can't stay away from me long. (*Places cup of tea on edge of pedestal.*) What a cocktail is to a man, tea is to a woman. Now for those bills. (*Sits down near pedestal. Hardy drinks tea. Business. Mrs. Falconer reaches out hand for cup and finds it empty.*) How strange! Could I have spilled it? (*Goes to samovar and pours out another cup, which she places on table this time. Sits again and opens jewel box.*) How generous Perez was! Dear Perez. (*She rises, goes to pedestal, rises on tiptoe and gingerly*

kisses Hardy. Then starts back a little.) Dear me! How queer! It almost seemed as if he kissed me back. (*Looking at bust.*) Why, that stupid maid has placed it too far back. (*Tries to move Hardy forward.*) Oh, dear, it's too heavy for me! And how soft it is. Oh, perhaps it's melting. The air may be too warm for it. (*Turns to go to window, which she opens.*)

HARDY (*low*)—Not so warm as the place he's in. (*Mrs. Falconer returns, takes vase of flowers and places them on pedestal. Then sits down and takes up bills again. Flowers tickle Hardy's nose. Business. He sneezes.*)

MRS. FALCONER—What's that! (*Hardy sneezes violently. This time Mrs. Falconer sees him, and starts up with a scream. Another sneeze.*)

MRS. FALCONER (*terrified*)—It's a warning from Heaven! (*She falls on her knees.*)

HARDY (*emerging from behind pedestal*)—Don't be frightened, Madge, don't be frightened! It's only I! (*Mrs. Falconer rises slowly, gazing at him.*)

MRS. FALCONER (*in great wrath*)—You! you! How dared you play such a trick upon me? (*Pause. Tragically.*) Where's that bust? (*Hardy points to door, right.*)

MRS. FALCONER—The coal closet! (*Hardy nods.*) Horrors! (*Begins to weep, then stops suddenly.*) Bring it out!

HARDY—The door's locked.

MRS. FALCONER (*pointing to side of door*)—There's the key. Bring it out! (*Hardy unlocks door and produces bust. It is streaked with coal dust.*)

MRS. FALCONER (*starting forward with outstretched arms*)—Oh, Perez!

HARDY—Look out! You'll smudge your nose! (*He replaces bust on pedestal.*)

MRS. FALCONER—He's beautiful, even like that. (*Kisses hand to bust. Then turning suddenly to Hardy.*) Good heavens, I kissed you!

HARDY—You did.

MRS. FALCONER (*furiously*)—I'll never forgive you, never! (*Sinks into chair. Hardy hesitates a moment,*

then moves toward door. Mrs. Falconer raises her head, and looks at him.)

MRS. FALCONER—Where are you going?

HARDY (*shortly*)—Home. And for good.

MRS. FALCONER—Come here!

HARDY (*advancing a step*)—No, never.

MRS. FALCONER (*beckoning*)—You are determined?

HARDY (*a step nearer*)—Quite.

MRS. FALCONER—You will never come again?

HARDY (*going back a step*)—Never.

MRS. FALCONER—We part forever? (*Beckoning.*)

HARDY (*going to her a step*)—Forever.

MRS. FALCONER (*cheerfully*)—All right. Now sit down there, and we'll go over the bills. (*Hardy sits down.*) Here's one from the jeweler. (*Hands bill to Hardy.*) We'll compare the items. (*Opens jewel box.*) What's the amount?

HARDY—Nine thousand four hundred and seventy-six dollars and ten cents.

MRS. FALCONER—What!

HARDY—Nine thousand four hundred and seventy-six dollars and ten cents.

MRS. FALCONER (*aghast*)—Nine thousand four hundred and seventy-six dollars!

HARDY—And ten cents.

MRS. FALCONER—Read off the items!

HARDY—They cover two years.

MRS. FALCONER—My two years of happiness.

HARDY—Ahem! Ready?

MRS. FALCONER—Yes. (*As Hardy reads off items, she compares them with articles in her jewel case.*)

Hardy—January 28, 1903. One diamond and sapphire ring, five hundred dollars.

MRS. FALCONER (*sighing*)—The first piece of jewelry he ever gave me.

Hardy—March 4th—

MRS. FALCONER—March 4th. We were married on the 9th.

HARDY—Wedding ring, with inscription, twenty-five dollars.

MRS. FALCONER (*looking tenderly at bust*)—Ah!

HARDY—Same date. One pair earrings, diamonds and black pearls, one thousand dollars.

MRS. FALCONER—Ah!

HARDY—June following, one diamond necklace, two thousand dollars.

MRS. FALCONER (*holding up necklace*)—Yes.

HARDY—September, one ring, two hundred dollars.

MRS. FALCONER—Yes.

HARDY—December, restringing five rows of pearls, fifty dollars.

MRS. FALCONER—I believe that's right.

HARDY—Chilly month, December. That ends the first year.

MRS. FALCONER—Go on with the second.

HARDY—March, one souvenir bracelet, Roman gold, one hundred and fifty dollars.

MRS. FALCONER—March! Souvenir of our wedding day—March the 9th.

HARDY—June, bird for the hair, one thousand dollars.

MRS. FALCONER (*starting violently*)—What?

HARDY—Bird for the hair, one thousand dollars.

MRS. FALCONER—That's a mistake!

HARDY—It's down here.

MRS. FALCONER—I know I never had that bird!

HARDY—July, diamond bracelet, two thousand dollars.

MRS. FALCONER (*searching*)—No!

HARDY—August, ruby ring, five hundred dollars.

MRS. FALCONER—No!

HARDY—October, one pair of earrings, birds, studded with diamonds, fifteen hundred dollars.

MRS. FALCONER (*excitedly*)—That bill's all wrong. Here are all my jewels. You see, I have no birds of any description. Of course, it's a mistake.

HARDY—Wait a minute. Here's a name against the last four items.

MRS. FALCONER (*snatching bill*)—Let me see. (*Slowly.*) Totty—

HARDY (*over her shoulder*)—Toes-in-the-Air.

MRS. FALCONER (*choking*)—Totty Toes-in-the-Air! Who's she?

HARDY—A dancer at the Royalty.

MRS. FALCONER—A dancer! Totty Toes-in-the-Air! Oh! (*Turning violently to bust.*) Oh, Perez! (*To Hardy, who has been laughing to himself.*) Anything more?

HARDY—Yes, here is something with your name on the margin.

MRS. FALCONER—Ah, really! Well, let us hear.

HARDY—To cleaning various articles, five dollars.

MRS. FALCONER (*beneath her breath, looking at bust*)—Five thousand dollars for that creature, and five dollars for me!

HARDY (*rubbing his hands*)—This is lovely!

MRS. FALCONER (*to bust*)—Deceiver! Double-face!

HARDY—Ha! ha! ha! He's in luck to be dead!

MRS. FALCONER—What do you mean by that?

HARDY—Why—why, as he's gone to the devil, I can't send him there.

MRS. FALCONER (*effusively*)—Thank you! Thank you! And to think of the tears I've wept for him! But I won't wear this any longer. (*Tears off widow's cap and tramples it under her foot.*) There! And there! And there!

HARDY—Good! You ought to have done that long ago.

MRS. FALCONER—Oh, you needn't rejoice. It won't do you any good. All men are alike.

HARDY—All but me.

MRS. FALCONER—And I hate them all. (*Turning again to bust.*) You were bald and you *did* squint! (*Hardy laughs silently.*) You had the obstinacy of a mule and the temper of a fiend! (*To Hardy, as she goes to door, left.*) Don't you move! Stay there!

HARDY—What are you going to do?

MRS. FALCONER—Wait and see. Five dollars for me! (*To bust.*) Oh, beast! (*Exit Mrs. Falconer.*)

HARDY—Tra, la, la! La! la! (*He dances about stage, waving his arms.*)

Heaven bless that jeweler who put Totty's name on the bill. (*To bust.*) Oh, you old reprobate! But I'm glad you were! If that hasn't opened her eyes, I don't know what will. What is she up to, I wonder? No matter, so long as she ceases to worship *that*. Now's my time, and I'll make the most of it. But, wait a minute! What was that she said? "All men are alike, and I hate them all." I don't blame her much. But suppose this should turn her against me. Then I should be in a worse mess than ever. What can I do? Ah, I have it. It's rather a mean trick, but it may win the game for me. (*Sits down and writes.*) There! I think in her present state of mind that will do the business. (*Goes to door at back and strikes bell on little table. Then disappears for a moment. Outside.*) Jenkins, in a few minutes, give that to Mrs. Falconer, as if it had just been delivered at the door, and take that for your trouble. (*Re-enter.*) Ha! ha! ha! If that don't bring her ladyship to my feet I'm mistaken. (*Enter Mrs. Falconer. She is now in handsome ball dress.*)

HARDY—By Jove!

MRS. FALCONER—Well, how do you like me?

HARDY—You look sweet enough to eat.

MRS. FALCONER (*laughing*)—Of course I eat. Do you think I live on air?

HARDY—Why, Madge, I don't know when I've heard you laugh like that.

MRS. FALCONER—I feel like laughing.

HARDY—Madge!

MRS. FALCONER—Well?

HARDY—Are you sure your mourning is over?

MRS. FALCONER—Doesn't this look like it?

HARDY (*tenderly*)—Then there is a chance for me?

MRS. FALCONER—No. I hold you to your promise. I have already told you I am done with men, which is only another name for brutes.

HARDY—Oh, very well. (*At door.*) I'll give it to her, Jenkins. (*Disap-*

pears for an instant, then returns with letter.)

MRS. FALCONER—For me?

HARDY—Yes.

MRS. FALCONER (*taking letter*)—Will you permit me?

HARDY—Certainly. (*Mrs. Falconer opens letter.*) Now for it! (*Mrs. Falconer screams, and letter falls from her hand.*)

HARDY—What's the matter? (*Mrs. Falconer, unable to speak, points to letter. Hardy picks it up.*)

HARDY (*reading*)—Dear madam: It is with pleasure that we inform you that the report of your husband's death was a mistake. He was severely injured, but is now entirely recovered. He will arrive in New York to-day, and you may expect to see him at any moment. Yours respectfully,

BLACK & STONE,
Attorneys.

MRS. FALCONER (*overcome*)—Alive! Alive! Oh, Tom, what shall I do?

HARDY—Meet him with open arms, of course.

MRS. FALCONER—Never!

HARDY (*as if about to go*)—Well, I'm in the way here. You don't want me any more.

MRS. FALCONER—Yes, Tom, I do want you. I've always wanted you, and I want you now more than ever. I have trifled with your love, but I've trifled with my own as well. Oh, what shall I say to you? Take me away with you anywhere—to the woods, to the wilderness. I will follow you gladly, anywhere! I will bless you for delivering me from the tyranny of an odious

man, who is unworthy of me, who has tortured me in a thousand ways while he was alive, and who resurrects himself now on purpose to spite me (*ready to cry*) just when I had decided to tell you that I loved you with all my heart!

HARDY (*aside*)—At last!

MRS. FALCONER (*clinging to him*)—Tom, save me!

HARDY—If I consent, will you forgive me everything?

MRS. FALCONER—Everything.

HARDY—You swear it?

MRS. FALCONER—I swear it.

HARDY—Then it was I who wrote that letter.

MRS. FALCONER (*with a cry*)—What! Then he isn't alive!

HARDY—Not a bit of it.

MRS. FALCONER (*indignant*)—Tom Hardy!

HARDY—Your oath!

MRS. FALCONER—Oh, I am too happy to be angry with you. Good gracious, but I've proposed to you!

HARDY—That's what you did.

MRS. FALCONER (*smiling*)—And your answer?

HARDY (*pointing to bust. Tragically.*) He stands between us!

MRS. FALCONER—He! Oh! (*She rushes to pedestal, seizes bust and flings it through the window.*)

MRS. FALCONER—There! Now will you have me?

HARDY—With all my heart. Come! (*Puts arm about her waist.*) We'll dance through life together! (*They waltz.*)

CURTAIN.



Fashions and Dress Designs

An Announcement

BEGINNING with our next issue, we intend to place at the disposal of our many readers an illustrated fashion department, accompanied by the most complete line of paper dress-patterns that can be procured, either in the United States or abroad.

This is done with the intent to simplify the task of the busy little home worker, whose natural instinct it is to order all the ways of her own household; and who, in most cases, occupies a social position in her own community that demands a variety of pretty gowns—perhaps on a limited income.

Feeling that this is a feature too important to be slighted, and wishing to forward the interests of our readers to the fullest extent, we have deferred the installment of this department to the issue which will follow this announcement, lest some of our readers should miss the benefit to be derived from it.

There are more reasons than mere saving of expense that favor home dressmaking. Moreover, the same principle holds in this as in any other creative work: if one would give artistic expression to her individuality, she must arrive at this result through her own brain processes, and not through the medium of others, who must necessarily purvey to the public by wholesale methods, as does the single individual who markets her goods to the many; and thus endlessly repeats her designs for her customers, collectively. To be considered original, therefore, in one's attire, one must give personal thought and attention to the matter, and this can best be done at home.

Any woman, however slender her purse, can, with good taste, ingenuity and the ample accessories of fashion-

plates and patterns now at her command, possess a dainty and serviceable wardrobe suited to all occasions—if she superintend the work under her own roof, with or without the aid of a seamstress.

How proverbial has become the remark: "It isn't the material that we have to reckon with in these days, but the tailor and the dressmaker;" and the bills prove the truth of it.

Remnants, bargain counters and summer sales have reduced the cost of material to a minimum; and the cost of production will be on the same economical scale when done within the precincts of home, and accompanied by the use of reliable patterns.

As many of the so-called "systems," and charts, designed for home dressmaking have been so elaborated that only a draughtsman or a graduate artisan in tailoring can follow their complex instructions, we purpose to offer one which shall be suited not only to the skilled work-woman, but to the novice; one that has adopted for its keynote "simplicity and accuracy"; also one whose designers have access to the most famous importing houses all over the globe: the best, the truest and the simplest paper patterns adapted to home use.

To this we shall add our experience, discrimination and taste in the selection of models which we shall reproduce as a guide to the prevailing modes, with advice from Paris and London in advance of the seasons.

This department cannot be otherwise than of great assistance to all out-of-town readers who, as a recognized movement of the times, are becoming more and more interested in home dressmaking; and all that can be done to further their efforts will be carefully undertaken by us.

A Baker's Dozen

By Grace MacGowan Cooke

WANT a buggy to go over 'n' locate a quarter section? Registered for it this mornin'? Well, say, you're a clipper, ain't you?"

"I guess I haven't done any more than plenty of the men," observed Miss Blake, temperately.

"But you've done a sight more than any woman I know," maintained the hotel man, with warmth. (He was hitching up for her in person, and she was waiting impatiently for the buggy.) "Say!" he began, irrelevantly. "I ain't married."

"Sorry to hear it!" from Miss Blake, as she jumped into the vehicle and gathered up her lines with a capable hand.

"Well, you needn't be; it ain't no misfortune to you. I'd marry—oh, I'd marry fast enough—if I could get me a good, smart wife that would help a fellow instead of being a drag."

The hotel man still held to the mare's head; the girl twitched her line impatiently. "All right; you do that," she chirruped, briskly.

"Say," the hotel man broke out again, still holding to the bits, "when you get over there you may find it ain't so awful easy to hold down a quarter section. Mebbe you'll weaken."

"Oh, let's mark it 'Continued in our next' and go on!" broke in the girl, not unkindly.

The hotel man looked relieved. "That's what we'll do," he agreed, heartily. "I want to talk to you about gettin' married; but we'll put it off till you've located, marked ownership, got your land surveyed, and all." And he added,

obligingly: "The surveyors'll be at Geary about to-morrow, I guess."

And Louise Blake had driven nearly two miles from Hydro when she began to laugh. Before her eyes came the office in Fort Smith—the long, dusty room, bounded by the wrong side of a counter, a clutter of squalid odds and ends thrust beneath, and over all the nervous click of the typewriters.

Again she was opening the notice that she had been allotted a quarter section in the drawing for Oklahoma claims. The girl at the desk next hers had just been making merry over Louise's frank avowal that she had never received an offer of marriage in her life. At the risk of bringing the cashier down on them, she thrust the document under that astonished damsel's nose. "There!" she whispered. "I'll be a woman of property as soon as I prove up and occupy. I bet fifty dollars I'll have a baker's dozen of proposals in six weeks."

The other looked her friend over with cold, critical eyes. "I'll take you," she whispered back; and the matter was settled.

Now the hotel man's tentative offer rushed back on her in all its halting details, and she laughed again. "Well, that's half a one, already," she confided to the open plain. "If he makes good that'll be first blood. A baker's dozen—that's thirteen. Six weeks isn't very long. Maybe—we'll see."

And with a light heart she faced her future.

Just now she was headed for a squaw man who, she was told, would be able to find her claim for her. The laughing airs of spring came rioting over the

prairie and fluttered her veil. "Dear Lord, what a land!" she whispered, looking out across those noble, rolling acres. "It looks as though it might be capable of feeding God's whole world."

She found her squaw man a slouching, shifty-eyed individual who, from long association with the Indians, had taken on something of their manner and silence. He earned his five dollars with due diligence, saw her tent pitched and her preparations made for remaining till she could secure the surveyors from Geary. Then he spoke:

"That there squaw you saw me with back at my diggings," with a jerk of the head, "she—she ain't my wife, rightly, you know. I ain't really married."

Miss Blake struggled with an inclination to say that it was high time he was, and merely nodded with an inarticulate murmur of assent.

"I'd ruther have a white wife," came the squaw man's next piece of gratuitous information.

"It's a matter of taste," contributed the girl, calmly.

"Well, there you got my platform," the squaw man rounded up. "Teck it or leave it—I'd ruther have a white wife."

"I think I'll leave it, if you don't mind," the girl suggested, mildly.

"Not at all! Not at all! No manner of offense. 'F you need any chores you'd pay for, remember me. My squaw takes in washing—don't fergit that." He slouched away in the swiftly gathering dusk. And the girl, looking after him, half whispered: "Well, that's a whole one, such as it is. That makes one and a half."

Deep in the night she waked and heard a full, clear baritone singing far away, accompanied—backgrounded, as it might be—by the light remittent beat of a pony's hoofs. Nearer and nearer came song and galloping hoof beats. Some one was celebrating the charms of his "Louisiana Lou" as he loped up the trail.

There was comfort in the sound. The way led within fifty feet of her tent, and at that point the melodious voice seemed to be singing directly to her. Then it

moved on up the trail and became stationary at the next cabin on the north, and she drifted off to sleep again on the waves of the ragtime melody. Morning brought the knowledge that the singer was her cowboy neighbor on that quarter section to the north.

"Wonder if he'll be number three," she murmured—and had the grace to blush—as she looked toward the cheery smoke of his cabin.

Having incidental news that the surveyors were at work on a place some three miles to the west, Louise went, afoot and weary, in search of them. The squaw man was keeping the horse and buggy at his diggings until she should be ready to return to Hydro. The elder of the overworked pair hesitated. "Well, I don't know— Yes, yes, I guess we might; but I've got no one to carry the chain."

The squaw man had another job. "Can't I carry it—the chain—myself?" suggested the girl.

"Why, yes, I reckon," the man allowed, dubiously.

"All right, then. I'll do it," she announced. "Come on. It's getting late."

To a girl fresh from an office, clad in trailing skirts and high-heeled shoes, the task should have been an appalling one; but it would take more than this to appall Louise Blake's spirit. She kilted up her train with a hatpin, bought a pair of moccasins from her suitor's squaw, and for hours plodded, chain in hand, in the burning sun after the surveyors. The unquenchable gayety of her nature manifested itself now and again in little outbursts of song or laughter.

Despite the veil, her skin stung with wind and sun; she amused herself by speculating as to which of the two men, if either, would be number three in her collection. A chance allusion to his wife, on the part of the elder man, brought an unexpected giggle from his employer; but the assistant did, in due form, with much less of mean caution, and rather more sentimental accompaniments, than the hotel man had vouchsafed her, offer, before the day was done, to join his fortunes to hers.

She was not free from twinges in regard to a certain feminine complicity in this deed. In short, she had begun, for pure mischief, the campaign which most young women inaugurate by force of their natures; and she was learning how easy it is to put oneself in the way of receiving a man's confidences and advances.

The next day saw her back at Hydro complying with the legal forms. The hotel man welcomed her effusively, and, learning that all had gone well, and that she was in to get some groceries and supplies, hastened to complete his tentative offer, so that Louise gleefully counted three proposals. "If I keep it up at this rate, or, rather, if they do," she said to herself, "I'll be able to write to Kit long before the six weeks is up."

She looked with regret at the stout figure of the gray-haired man who came to wait on her at the little store. He was a cheerful old fellow, and immensely interested in her and her adventures. When he had said for the seventeenth time, "You're just like my wife"—a form of commendation much in vogue among elderly gentlemen—Louise's young heart quite warmed to him, and she began to tell him about her proposals.

"Now, look here, little girl, you just watch out. You don't want to get yourself tied up to none of them good-for-nothing—"

"Of course I don't."

"But, then, after all, it's bound to be lonesome for you. Now, I've got a son, and he's—well, he's all right. I wish't he was here to-day; I'd like you to see him."

The Evil One counseled Louise to sigh tenderly, "Yes, it is lonely—for a girl alone."

"It don't need to be lonesome for you," declared the old man, briskly, as he packed parcels of tea and sugar, of oatmeal and breakfast food, in about her feet in the buggy. "I'll just send him over to-morrow to see you. You young folks around here might as well get acquainted. Lord! why not be sociable?"

"Why not?" chuckled the girl, as she

sent the mare at a keen pace out across the sunlit levels toward her claim.

Louise met her neighbor of the voice next morning. He was riding down for staples to work on his wire fence, so he told her.

A typical cowboy he was—long and lean and graceful in the saddle, a bit slow and halting afoot, with the fresh color under the tan and the clear, direct eye that such a life gives. He came up with outstretched hand, had learned her name, and gave his own.

"I'm Burch Poston," he said, smiling; and the smile, somehow, matched his voice. "I reckon you and I are liable to see a good deal of each other. It's plucky of you to come and home-stead. I don't see why a woman shouldn't, but it takes a lot of courage."

"I heard you singing night before last"—smiling in her turn, frankly, straight into his eyes as they shook hands. "It sounded sort of cheerful. I hope it's a habit with you."

"It is," admitted Poston, gayly. "I'm glad you're not going to kick about it. Our neighbor to the south does—he's a Dutchman."

"Going to build?"

"Yes. Are you?"

"Oh, yes; I'm going right back to Little Rock as soon as I get things all in order here, and bring down a car load of lumber."

"You must let Paint and me do your errands for you," said the cowboy. "I don't see how you can get along without a pony." And he rubbed Paint's nose fondly, whereat the pony, a bright-eyed, clean-limbed example of the best type of cow horse, nuzzled his master responsively. "Paint's all the family I've got, but he's lots of company," the cowboy concluded.

So he was unmarried. Louise flushed a little, and said, softly: "Yet you are building a home."

"Oh, I'm going to build a house by and by. I put up the shack I've got. I'm a kind of jack carpenter. A fellow learns a good many trades on the range."

All this time the girl was hoping—and chiding herself for the hope—that the

talk of home building would lead to her fourth proposal. She was growing skilled in setting conversational traps for such game. But she reflected that this was a self-respecting man, and one who would not follow in the footsteps of the squaw man. And just then a voice behind her shoulder interrupted their conversation.

"Mornin'," it proclaimed, impersonally. Then, as they both turned: "This Miss Louise Blake? I'm Jake Shulls—old man Shulls' son from over to Hydro. The old man he was talking to you about me yesterday—reckon you haven't forgot?" And he included them both in a rich smile.

Suddenly he seemed to acquire a distrust of Poston and Poston's friendly, familiar attitude. "That your brother, Miss Blake?" he inquired.

"No; this is Mr. Poston. He has the section north of mine. Mr. Poston, Mr. Shulls." And she looked helplessly from one to the other.

"Married?" inquired the newcomer, promptly, apparently resolved to calm his own fears, or to know the worst, out of hand.

The cowboy shook his head. His color rose, and he bit his lip. He looked as though he wanted to laugh, and Louise hated him for it.

"Mighty lonesome work homesteadin' out here all by your lonesome." Again Shulls spread upon them that sirupy smile. "Well—er—not particular lonesome fer a man, I mean, but mighty lonesome fer a lady."

Burch apparently remained with the benevolent intention of relieving the girl of an annoyance. She raised her chin with a sudden jerk. How dared he hint, by his attitude of protection, that she couldn't take care of herself?

"Well, good-morning, Mr. Poston," she said, crisply. "Mr. Shulls' father sent him over to see me on business." And before she had time to thoroughly regret this step her tall neighbor was gone and Jake Shulls was in the middle of the most sentimental proposal she had yet received.

Her clear gray eyes followed the well-built figure as Burch strode back in the

direction of his own claim, blithely whistling, and clinking his long-shanked spurs; and as he broke into the song which had lulled her slumbers the night before a sudden overmastering indignation took possession of her. She caught the fatuous young Shulls up at about the third period of his elaborate speech with, "No! If I had wanted to marry I wouldn't be out here homesteading. You're the fourth that's asked me that same fool question in four days. I never saw the man yet that I wanted to marry."

Apparently to bolster some inward weakening, she repeated this last statement in a somewhat louder tone, her eyes fixed on the light feather of wood smoke that hung above her neighbor's cabin, as Jake Shulls made his dejected adieux.

Louise's trip home to Little Rock was in the nature of a triumph. Captain Carmack, the conductor, was a friend of her father's, and he admired her exploit as though it had been the brilliant achievement of a daughter. The rest of the train crew seemed to share in his enthusiasm, and she tasted the sweets of being regarded as a heroine. There were a couple of drummers in the Pullman. One of them she knew, and as the talk about her quarter section, her courage and enterprise, went forward, he brought up his companion and presented him.

After a little conversation—in which, as she afterward remembered, she had been led to state very positively that she had registered, formally marked possession on her claim, and that her quarter section was an excellent piece of land—the men went back to their seats.

She came out of a little reverie, in which Burch Poston's pleasant voice and smiling eyes figured—as she thought—rather too prominently, to note, half absently, in her strip of mirror, that the two men were flipping a quarter. The elder—and fatter—who had just been presented to her, apparently won. He pocketed the coin, rose and came down to her, inquiring deferentially: "May I sit and talk to the Oklahoma heroine again?"

"Now, what are you going to do with this hundred and sixty acres of land, little woman?" he began, with ponderous gallantry.

"Well," rejoined Louise, her natural inclination to chaff getting the better of her desire to play the sentimental and lead up to the proposal which she hoped was coming—"well, I thought I'd just let it stay right there where it is, and farm it."

"You—farm it!" murmured the fat drummer. That is, he intended to murmur; but, desiring that his words should reach her above the noise of the train, he shouted this remark, in an almost menacing tone. "Look," he continued, slightly abashed at the outcome, and now speaking somewhat more softly—"look at that little hand, and tell me if it could farm."

The girl looked obediently at her hands. She pressed her lips hard together to keep the wicked smiles from curving them, and assumed what she conceived to be an imbecile expression meet for the occasion. "Well, then, I'm sure I don't know how I shall get along," she rejoined, in a small, deceitful voice.

"You need a man; that's what a dear, little, dependent woman like you always needs."

"Right—and I'll give you thirty-five dollars a month," hung on Louise's lips. She fairly held her breath to keep back the pert, saucy words; the repartee would be so delicious; and yet, till she could honestly call the thing a proposal, she must not scare him away. "Yah, it's hard work, stalking proposals!" flitted through her mind, while the fat drummer's voice lurched on:

"You need a man to take charge of things. Now, I'm a lonesome fellow, and my friends have always been shoving it at me that I ought to marry; but I don't want a wife that's going to board in one of the city hotels and blow in everything I can make on glad rags. But I've always said that if I could find a woman—like you——"

"Five!" ejaculated Louise, involuntarily; and then blushed burning crimson.

"Five what?" inquired the fat drummer, suspiciously.

"Well, I've had five proposals of marriage in the five days since I drew this claim," explained Louise, honestly.

"And I'm the fifth," supplied the fat drummer, rising.

The girl nodded.

"Yes, that's me. I never did think of a good thing in my life but what a lot of other fellows had thought of it ahead of me—I never thought of it till then, of course. Just like this thing. Oh-h-h—so long!" and the fat drummer was trotting dejectedly back to his seat, leaving Louise victorious but a little remorseful.

Suddenly she remembered the tossing of the coin. The other drummer, her acquaintance, was not in his seat. She turned her head; he was approaching from the smoking compartment. "Is this seat engaged, miss?" he asked, with the humorous pretense of being a stranger.

"No."

"Neither it nor the girl in it?" He gave her a shrewd, searching glance. "I'll tell you, Louise—you'll let me call you Louise, won't you?—I've had something on my mind I've wanted to say to you for months. But we don't get much chance to talk together, do we? I'm out on the road, and you're off home—steading the face of the earth, so I guess I'll just seize this occasion."

Finding nothing to say, Louise tried her best to look unspeakable things.

"The fact is, I always thought a whole lot of you—I guess you knew that? Everybody else did, anyhow. There's a girl up at Kiowa that I go to see when I go through there. Oh, nothing serious, you know—not the least bit like I feel about you. But she's the merchant's daughter there, and I just kind o'-go up to see her because—because there's no place else to go; and, then, I always sell the old man a nice, big bill of goods."

"Yes," said Louise, with a sudden outbreak of her own manner, "I heard you were engaged to that girl at Kiowa."

"Well, I'm not," protested the drum-

mer, indignantly. "I talked so much to her about you that she asked me if I wasn't engaged to *you*. Am I?"

"No; you've never asked me," returned Louise, gently.

"Say"—again he looked keenly at her—"I'd ask you in a minute if I thought you'd have me."

The girl laughed exultantly, and her naturally pale cheek flushed.

"There's no other way to find out," she challenged.

And the drummer walked down the aisle, a rejected man, while she told herself: "Six! Nearly half, and I've only been a landed proprietor for five days!"

Arrived at Little Rock, she took the list a builder furnished her to a lumber mill. She had withdrawn her little store of cash from the bank, and was paying for everything as she went. At the mill she found that the fame of her achievement had preceded her.

She knew the office girl at the lumberman's desk, and stopped to chat a moment.

"Well, you are a plucky one! I'm proud of you," the stenographer called after her as she went down the long, dusty wareroom toward the end where the mantels and interior finish were displayed.

When about half the bill of lumber had been gotten out the junior partner came notifying his senior, who had himself been waiting upon Louise, that he was needed in the office, and offering to complete the transaction with Miss Blake. So harmonious were the dealings, and so prolonged the transactions, that wicked Louise left with her car load of lumber going south—and her seventh proposal. "And rather the most respectable of the lot," as she said, reckoning them over.

She took her twelve-year-old brother back to Oklahoma with her; and, as on the journey up, she found herself an object of much interest, and had many questions to answer. Before she reached Hydro she counted two more proposals. One it had taken all her newly acquired skill to extort from the brakeman, a boy she had gone to school with.

"That was a shame—a dirty Irish

trick of me!" she said, when the deed was accomplished. "Billy's younger than I am, and if I'd 'a' let him alone he'd 'a' let me alone." She sighed. For the Pullman conductor she felt no ruth. He was insultingly confident, and would have been as hard to flag down or sidetrack as the boy had been to draw on.

At Hydro she found her car load of lumber on a siding. Again the tent was pitched, numerous feminine belongings gotten out, and preparations made for comfort while the house was building. Did a qualm of remorse touch her as she tuned the pretty guitar upon which she played with such skillful fingers, and which she brazenly hoped might lure her cowboy neighbor to the north into her toils?

Burch was over the first day of their arrival. Bobby, the twelve-year-old, took to him immensely. The young man told her that he had bespoken three carpenters for her, and that they would put up her house in no time. Indeed, Burch was all that was helpful and kindly as a neighbor. It was only as a suitor that he appeared to this spoiled young person hopelessly, almost offensively, laggard.

The little house grew apace. Oh, the bliss of it! Oh, the delight of it! All her own—every nail and chip and board! Her own planning, her own contriving; and, best of all, bought with her own labor!

The guitar did its appointed duty in coaxing her neighbor across the line, and he added to it the harmonica, which all cowboys play with skill. His voice mingled melodiously with her accompaniments.

They had long, happy evenings together, discussing their very practical and very energetic plans, while Bobby snored as only a twelve-year-old boy can snore.

Was it possible that such communion could long exist without the story of the proposals coming out? It was not. Out it all came one evening, in Louise's most airy, slangy fashion. It was dusk, and yet she thought her listener's expression dropped, through all gradations of distaste, to final and utter con-

demnation as she wound up. But she stuck to her colors.

"Now, these three carpenters, you know—one of them is married. I can't blame him for that. 'Tisn't his fault. I expect a woman just up and married him." And she laughed frivolously. "That little, chunky one is engaged to the tall, red-headed girl with the jaw, that waits on table over at Hydro. Oh, I don't blame him, either; besides, the other one—the one that stutters so—proposed, all right. I thought he'd never on earth get through it, but he did. He was the tenth."

"Did you think we'd try that new song again?" asked her visitor, irrelevantly. And Louise felt herself reproved.

After that little Paint stopped less frequently at the cottage. His rider would dash past in full cowboy panoply, the fresh wind turning the sombrero squarely up from the tanned face, but his gaze set intently forward. Nor did he pause unless Louise, with a feminine desire to shock him into spoken reproach, halted him with some such frivolous impertinence as: "Matrimonial market's rather dull this morning—haven't had a proposal for two hours!"

But after a time this became painfully true. The fourth occupant of their section had proposed to Louise in due season. "That just came in the way of nature, you know," she explained to Burch Poston. "He thought three hundred and twenty acres would be just twice as good as a hundred and sixty; and he wants somebody to cook and wash and iron for him—but he makes eleven all right, all right!"

The cowboy gave her a curious look. "I hate to see a woman cynical about such matters," he commented, quietly.

"Then you men oughtn't to behave in such a way as to make 'em cynical," Louise retorted, fiercely. And to her own astonishment, the unwonted tears filled her eyes.

"I don't—do I?" inquired Burch, so kindly that the words were robbed of their sting.

It seemed as though capricious fate, having flung eleven proposals of mar-

riage into the girl's lap in the course of three weeks, would deny her any other; but one lazy Sunday brought the twelfth. She told Poston about it, between laughter and tears. "You had just gone, you know, and Bobby was asleep in the tent. This one was a tramp—a real hobo. He came wagging up the trail, looking around for a dog, saw me, took off his old battered hat, and asked me for a dinner. He had little green eyes with red rims, and funny little red dog whiskers all around his ears; oh, he was the limit!"

"But I gave him a dinner because I always feel so awfully, dreadfully sorry for anything or anybody that's hungry—don't you?"

"Well, he sat there kind of clicking his teeth and growling over his food like an old dog; and I kept on getting sorrier and sorrier for him, and went into the tent and got him some pie. He was almost tearfully grateful. He asked me if I cooked the dinner and made that pie. I told him, of course, I did—who would I get to cook out here? He said the things tasted like—tasted like—his mother used to make 'em!"

The two young people broke down and laughed unrestrainedly.

"Well, that certainly was pretty near a declaration itself," debated Poston.

"Oh, yes; that was what he was leading up to. I heard a big silence, and I looked around to see what was the matter. He was gazing at me out of the corners of his little green eyes so funny that I thought he was having a fit.

"Then he said: 'Say, lady, you kin cook for me.' I didn't catch on for a minute, and he acted so strange that I thought the pie had choked him. 'I mean it,' he said; 'you kin have me. I hain't been much of a lady's man of late, but those pies does for me—I can't ruzzist 'em.'"

"I got my breath and my wits about then; and I convinced him that I could 'ruzzist' his offer."

"It was hardly fair to come down on him so savage," Poston objected. "You know he wouldn't have proposed to you if you hadn't wanted him to."

"Hadn't what?—*what?*" cried Louise.

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"Matrimonial market's rather dull this morning—"

"You don't mean to hint that I tried to get the old horror to propose to me, do you?"

"Well"—bluntly—"you've been willing to be asked by some pretty measly looking specimens—no—no, I don't—I don't mean it!" as he saw how hurt and angry she looked.

"I didn't—I never dreamed of such a thing," she declared, hotly. "I just fed him because—like——"

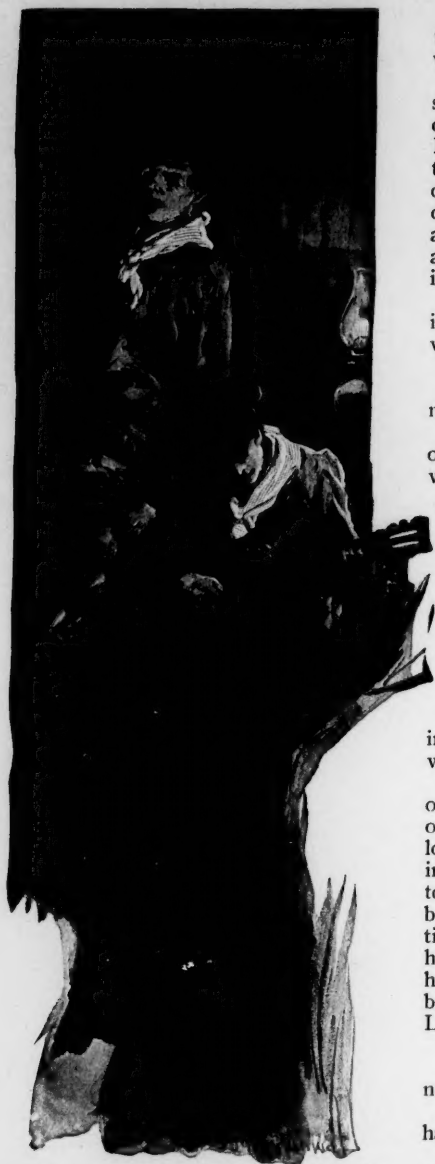
"You fed him just as you told Jake Shulls' father you were lonesome and would like to get acquainted with the young folks; just as you brought out your guitar and praised my singing. You get your fun out of it, and the other fellow can do the walking," put in the cowboy, quietly.

They were standing at the new boundary fence they had put up in partnership between their two farms. Burch folded his arms and leaned upon one of the posts. Louise picked nervously at the barbs of the upper wire, stung, but resolutely ignoring his tone and attitude.

"Isn't it too ridiculous?" she began, in a low, hurried voice. "He was a hobo—but I counted him—he made twelve. I've got twelve—and I don't seem—I don't seem to get any more."

Silence. She looked up at the tall cowboy half imploringly. "I have to have thirteen to—win my bet, you know."

Louise bristled up a little. "I despise a man that hasn't any pluck."



His voice mingled melodiously with her accompaniments.

The cowboy could afford to smile at this hinted aspersion. "I'll tell you what I'll do," he said.

The girl flushed and trembled. The slow, calm voice of the range rider went quietly on: "I've found out about Dutchie; he ain't married; that girl that's with him is his sister. I'll go over and get him. He'll ask you inside of twenty minutes, if he thinks there's any hope of your taking him. He goes about telling everybody that he's looking for a good, smart wife."

Silence at first; then: "It's—it's going to rain." In a very low, small voice.

"I've got an umbrella," cheerfully.

"But you—but you have to lend it to me—if it—if it rains."

Hope and doubt struggled together on the frank, tanned face under the big, white, cowboy hat. The gray eyes searched her own face keenly. Had she not told him how she led the others on? "I don't mind a little wetting in your service," he said, finally; and the clinking of spurs told her that he had turned and moved off toward Dutchie's quarter section.

"Burch!" the girl called after him.

"Well?" halting, and speaking over his shoulder.

"Come back here—aren't you going to ask me—at all? Don't you really want me?"

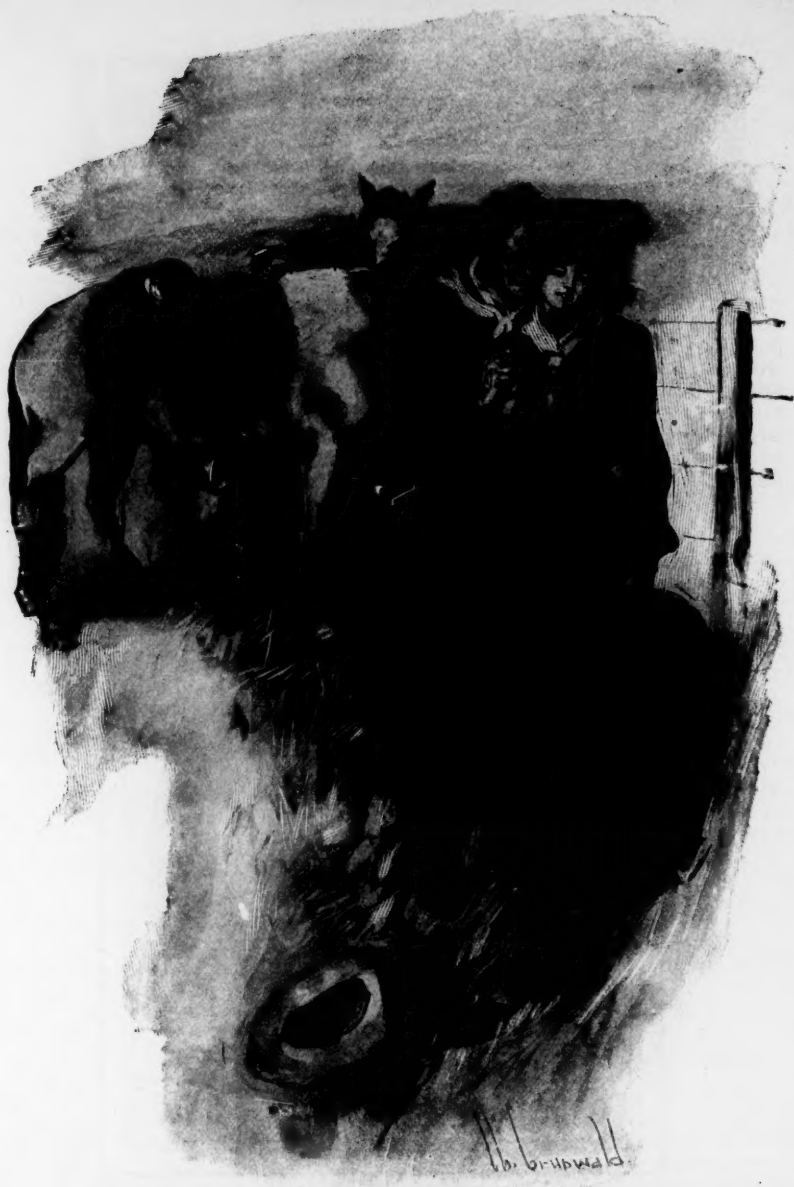
The tall, muscular cowboy put a hand on the fence post, and vaulted lightly over. He stood beside the girl and looked long into her downcast face, trying to decipher it. "No, I'm not going to ask you," he said, finally. "I'll not be number thirteen in any such collection. But"—he folded her swiftly in his arms, laid his glowing cheek upon hers—which seemed to catch and send back the friendly fire—"but I love you, Louise."

"And you'll——"

"No, I won't—I won't do it, Louise, not even to win a bet for you."

The small, pale face was raised to his half wistfully.

"Darling," he said, whispering, "I'll tell you what—I'll promise I won't refuse you!"



"Darling," he said, whispering, "I'll promise I won't refuse you."

The Passing Hour

AN ILLUSTRATED CHRONICLE
OF THE WORLD'S DOINGS

A Social Leader from Texas.

Mrs. Cornelia Adair, whose portrait appears on this page, probably furnishes the most notable proof in our present century that the American woman of to-day is pre-eminently fitted not only to reign in the most illustrious social circles, but to manage large moneyed interests and landed estates as successfully as any man of them all. She has recently returned

to London, where she is one of the social leaders of the American colony, having been in New York City during part of the present opera season. Her ranch in Texas covers more than a million acres of valuable grazing lands, and from it she has realized a profit of one hundred thousand dollars per year during the last decade. In the past thirty years, since it was bought by the late John Adair, at an extremely small sum, the property has become so very



MRS. CORNELIA ADAIR, ONE OF THE WEALTHIEST RANCH OWNERS OF THE UNITED STATES; ALSO OCCUPYING A PROMINENT POSITION IN THE AMERICAN COLONY OF LONDON.



MR. BERT LEVY, THE AUSTRALIAN ARTIST, DESIGNING A COSTUME FOR ANNA HELD.

valuable that it is estimated at between five and ten millions.

From its entrance to the headquarters there is a distance of eighty miles, and from thirty to fifty miles is an average day's ride for this enthusiastic ranchwoman.

The Theatrical Costume Designer.

The question of designing the elaborate and costly costumes worn on the modern stage is not the least important of the many subjects engrossing the attention of the theatrical manager. Many theaters, especially those presenting what may be called spectacular productions, maintain on their salary list an artist whose most important task is that of designing the costumes of the company. To him is due the

harmony of effect of the whole stage picture, and any artistic triumph that may come from an attractively gowned star or a member of the chorus. The photograph of Anna Held, produced this month, shows this talented actress in her dressing room posing for Mr. Bert Levy, an Australian artist of note, who is the costume designer for the Weber-Ziegfeld company, now playing in "Higgledy-Piggledy."

A Remarkable Child Pianist.

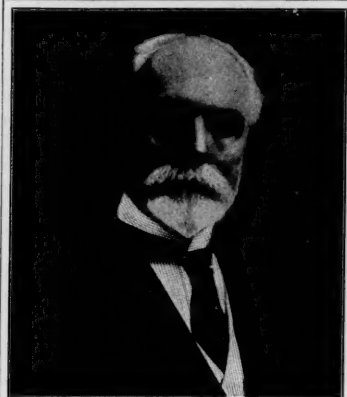
This is a world and a season of prodigies in the art realm; and there are theories and theories concerning all prodigies, which may not be discussed here: suffice it to say that such memorizing feats and technical skill as are evidenced by the gifted child, Milada



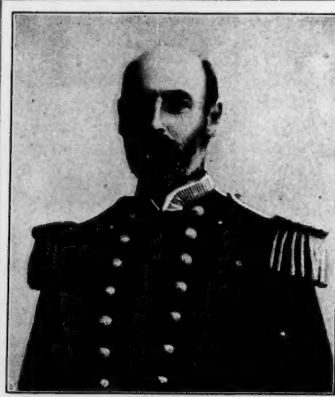
JOHN BARRETT, UNITED STATES MINISTER TO THE NEW REPUBLIC OF PANAMA, WHOSE DUTIES WILL BE MATERIALLY INCREASED BY THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PANAMA CANAL.



LLOYD C. GRISCOM, UNITED STATES MINISTER TO JAPAN, WHOSE HANDLING OF IMPORTANT DIPLOMATIC QUESTIONS HAS RECENTLY ATTRACTED FAVORABLE COMMENT.



WHITELAW REID, WHOSE RECENT APPOINTMENT AS AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO THE COURT OF ST. JAMES HAS BROUGHT TO HIM THE MOST IMPORTANT DIPLOMATIC GIFT AT THE DISPOSAL OF HIS COUNTRY.



REAR-ADMIRAL CHARLES H. DAVIS, U. S. N., THE UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE ON THE COMMISSION SELECTED TO DETERMINE THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE RUSSO-ENGLISH NORTH SEA EPISODE.

Cerny, whose photographs are here reproduced at the ages, respectively, of three and a half and eleven years, cannot but be resultant, by heredity, from some past life or lives.

She was enthusiastically received by a New York audience the first of this year, in Mendelssohn Hall, and, except for her engagement in Festival Hall, at the St. Louis Exposition last summer, it was her first public appearance in this country since her foreign triumphs.

Within eight months after, Milada had a repertoire which she played by ear, and rendered at several concerts; then she suddenly became blind—it was feared permanently so. Fortunately,



MILADA CERNY, THE ELEVEN-YEAR-OLD PIANIST WHOSE ARTISTIC TRIUMPHS, HERE AND ABROAD, HAVE PLACED HER IN THE FOREMOST RANK OF THE MUSICAL PRODIGES OF THE SEASON.

She is an unspoiled, unaffected little girl, of Bohemian parentage, born in Chicago where her father, a distant relative of the famous Carl Cerny, gave lessons on the piano. He discovered her talent at a very early age. She often sat in the room when he was giving lessons, so quiet and absorbed that her presence was forgotten. One day her parents, being in an adjoining room, heard some one playing a Clementi *sonatina*, and hurrying in found it was their tiny daughter, three years and a half old.

however, her sight was restored after three years, and, in 1903, she reappeared at concerts and private musicales in London, where she became a great favorite.

Upon the recommendation of the Bohemian composer, Kovarovic, director of the Royal Opera House at Prague, she was engaged to play there, where but three other instrumentalists, Kubelik, Ondricek and Saint-Saens, have been heard since its opening, about twenty years ago. At the piano her manner is grave and serious, but she is

devoted to dolls like any other child of eleven, and carries three with her on her travels. Her interpretation and touch are wonderfully sympathetic.

A Modern Court Beauty.

The court of Charles the Second has always been famous in history for its beauties, but it is doubtful if that or the court of any other English monarch

advantage, to hygienic rules which preserve and enhance good looks, or to the infusion of American blood into the English peerage.

Among the most famous beauties of the British aristocracy is the young and lovely Countess of Powis, whose portrait, which we present herewith, is sufficient proof that her claim to rare comeliness is beyond dispute.

She was formerly the Honorable



COUNTRESS OF POWIS, ONE OF ENGLAND'S MOST DISTINGUISHED COURT BEAUTIES,
A REIGNING SOCIAL LEADER BY RIGHT OF BIRTH AND PERSONAL CHARM.

numbered so many beautiful women as can be seen at one of the drawing rooms of Edward the Seventh. This may be due to the fact that the women of the early twentieth century know how to set off their charms to the best

Violet Ida Eveline Lane-Fox, and is the daughter of Baron Conyers. She was married to the Earl of Powis in 1890, and has one son, Viscount Clive, two years old. Lady Powis is also the Baroness Darcy de Knayth.

THE PUBLISHER'S WORD

IN offering you the second number of SMITH'S MAGAZINE we would like to tell you something about the magazine and what we intend to do with it. In the first place, we do not feel like boasting about either this or the first number. We are proud of them and feel that those who read them will agree with us in thinking that they are well worth the price. But we expect to do so much better than this that we feel more inclined to tell you more about what we are going to do than what we have already done. We may not have hit the bull's-eye in either of our first two shots—but watch us! We are just warming up to the work now. Wait and see what we will do later on.



WE realize that we have set for ourselves a hard task. A new thing must be something besides new in order to make a success. The latest built ocean flyer is superior both in speed and comfort to its predecessor. The last skyscraper that went up in Manhattan had in it features of convenience not to be found in its lofty neighbors. A glance at any news stand will show you that there are many and various competitors in the magazine field. They are all the proof of a certain amount of energy and intelligence. It is a race in which many enter and in which only the picked few last to the end of the first lap. For a magazine to find a place, it must contain something exceptional, either in ideas or in the form of their presentation. If it is going to succeed largely—as we hope—it must represent either something better than is found in any of the others or something that is entirely new. We think that we can do better than our contemporaries in some respects. We know that we can give you a new magazine of a new kind.

WHEN we decided to publish SMITH'S MAGAZINE we had no pattern to follow. We cast aside every publication in the field and struck out on new lines. We believe that with all the efforts hitherto made to publish a magazine for home people, no adequate magazine has yet been issued. We do not wish to produce a class publication, or one devoted to fads of any degree. We have in mind the plain people. By "plain" we mean you, and your friends, and ourselves. Lincoln was a plain man. There are hundreds of thousands like him in this country—that is, with the same degree of plainness. They represent the bone and sinew of the republic. We are trying to reach them in SMITH'S.



YOU will find that the fiction in SMITH'S has a certain simplicity and sincerity about it that makes it appeal to earnest, sincere people. You will find in it no stories in which the author shows how cleverly he can entangle himself and yourself in a skein of curiously wrought phrases. Such efforts are interesting as examples of what may be done in the line of bluff and pretension. They are not interesting as stories. The stories that we are hunting for are those with a personal, human element. They are the stories that people talk about. They don't need advertising, but silently collect for their authors a steady following that no amount of advertising could hold.



AT this point, we would like you to read a clipping from the Boston Herald. It was printed in the issue of January 19th. Here it is:
"The most popular author among readers of fiction appears to be Charles Garvice. On one news stand, recently,

The Publisher's Word—Continued.

were spread out no less than nineteen different books written by this author."

In the first number of SMITH's we started, as a serial, "Diana's Destiny," a new novel by Charles Garvice. To insure his work for the readers of SMITH's we have made a contract securing the exclusive rights to his stories for a number of years. In this issue, also, you will find the first installment of a serial by Sir William Magnay, Bart., entitled "Ruperta." You will see that it is something quite different from "Diana's Destiny"—yet strangely similar in one respect—it is strongly and delightfully interesting. There are more new serials coming.



NOW for some of the special features that will make SMITH's stand in a class all by itself. It is going to be a "Home Magazine." Everyone in your family will find something in it that makes a special appeal to her or him, personally. There are articles such as "The Out-of-Town Girl in New York." If you happen to be an out-of-town girl, or know one—surely you fall in one or other of these classes—look at it. Whether you are man or maid, urban or suburban, you ought to be interested in these hints on how to find bargains in the New York stores. And here is something of interest to another class entirely—the series of articles, "Safeguarding the Home," which starts in this number. The object of this series is to assist the family in the protection of the home.



IT is well known that the average wage-earner has many calls upon his purse besides those connected with the buying of the actual necessities of life. The head of a family has, or should have, an eye to the future. It is right that he should lay by as much of his surplus as he can for the benefit of his family; and he generally does this in several ways. If it is possible, he insures his life in one of the many com-

panies doing business in this country. This is a favorite method of providing against the suffering entailed by the loss of the wage-earner. It is the most successful method, and to-day there are countless thousands of wives and mothers in the United States who feel doubly safeguarded against misfortune because of the policies taken out by the husband and father.

During the past year there have been several attempts made by interested publications to question the integrity of the managing heads of certain life insurance corporations, and indirectly to cast a doubt upon the value of life insurance. As this involved a subject of paramount interest to the home, SMITH's MAGAZINE instituted a careful and searching investigation, the result of which is found in this number of the magazine.

In a later issue of the magazine will be published an exhaustive article on the value of building and loan associations as a method of providing for the future.

Other subjects of interest to the home family will be taken up from month to month. Fraternal societies and their influence on the home, and the many temptations besetting the wage-earner, such as stock gambling, horse racing, etc., will be carefully and systematically treated.



AND there are other topics of a widely different nature which we will treat just as systematically. Beginning in this number, there is a department devoted to fashions and patterns. This will be under the care of an editor well equipped by long experience in the fashions, not only in this country, but of Paris and London. Everything possible will be done to make the fashion articles up to date and efficient. Each design published will be based upon a practical pattern. Helpful suggestions in other lines and friendly talks with readers will be included in the department. In this con-

The Publisher's Word—Continued.

nection we will be glad to have our friends write us as often as they please in regard to the policy of the magazine. Suggestions will be welcome.



IT has been said that Americans are the most omnivorous readers of short stories in the world. As we have outlined the policy of SMITH'S MAGAZINE, we expect to publish from eight to twelve short stories each month. In this age of strong competition it is not an easy matter to obtain that number of stories—that is, the *best* short stories. To-day there are probably thirty magazines in this country publishing short fiction as a part of their table of contents, and it would surprise you to know just how few authors there are who can write an acceptable short story. Take the fiction in this number of SMITH'S MAGAZINE, for instance. The eight short stories published represent at least four hundred stories considered. That means one in fifty found sufficiently interesting and well written to publish.

We are rather proud of our May fiction. We hope that you will enjoy every single one of the stories from "Happy Heart, Cowboy," by B. M. Bower, to "The Baddes' Boy in Town," which is a gem in its way. B. M. Bower, by the way, is rapidly coming to the front as an author of stories of Western ranch life. There is something in the virile, strenuous atmosphere of the West that affords great opportunities for the writer of fiction. The breeze-swept plains; the wild, free life of the cowboy; the close communion with the raw edges of life offer a broad variety of color for the author who knows his Western people and his scenes.

In this number of SMITH'S MAGAZINE

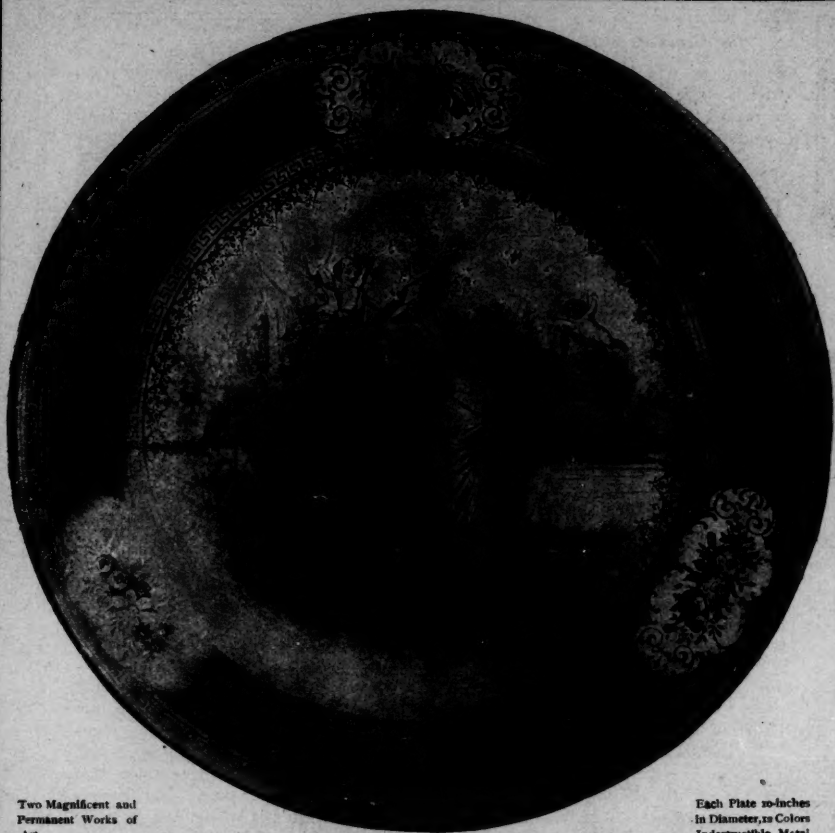
is published the second installment in a series of stories contributed by Cyrus Townsend Brady. In securing Civil War stories by Dr. Brady, we followed our policy of publishing only the best fiction by the best authors. You all know Cyrus Townsend Brady. You all know that he can write more thrilling and real war stories than anyone to-day. He has a tremendous field in the greatest war of the century. The Civil War is a big subject, but we think that Dr. Brady has lived up to it.



THERE is a lot more to tell you that must go over till next month.

We haven't space for half the things we would like to say. There is a series of stories by Vincent Harper to start next month. They are about a certain Major Corker, who is sure to win your friendship. Mr. Harper is one of the most prominent writers of humorous stories in the magazine field. In these stories, he will show you that he deserves all the prominence he has and more besides. Then there is the department that we call "The Passing Hour." You will see that develop into something that you will want as regularly as you want your meals. And there are a host of other things that will keep till another time. Just remember that SMITH'S is young, and that like all young things it will grow fast. In choosing a name for it we hit on one that ought to suit a great many people. We will suit you in other respects. If you are not quite satisfied with the present issue, remember that there is still better to come. If you are satisfied, we think that what is satisfaction at present will grow into a warmer and friendlier feeling for SMITH'S in the future.





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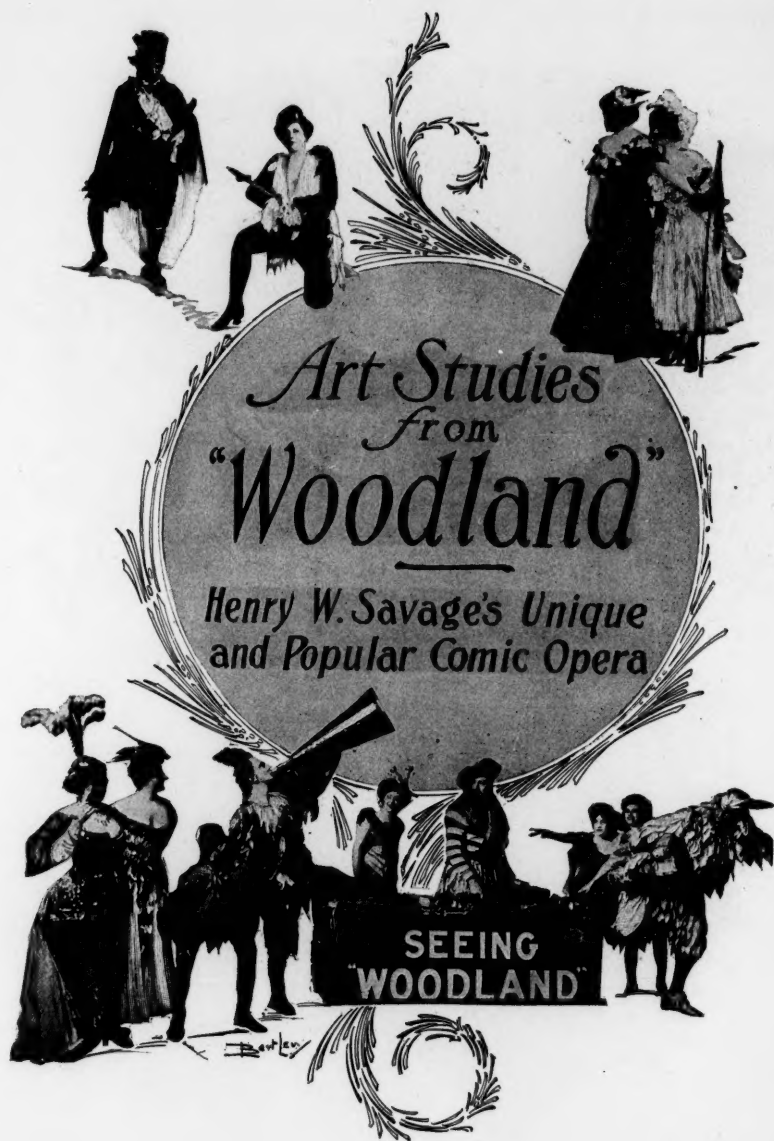
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LIEUTENANT SPARROW



THE TURTLE DOVE: "The only
thing that she can sing is
'Love, Love, Love.'"



THE BLUE JAY AND
LADY PEACOCK



JENNY WREN: "Don't you think my kisses are worth their face value?"



THE AVOWAL OF PRINCE EAGLE

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LADY PEACOCK: "In society."



THE PARROT: "Have you ever contemplated matrimony?"
THE OWL: "Often; that's why I have never married."



LADY PEACOCK: "Society is a small
body of accidents entirely sur-
rounded by money."



THE ROOSTER: "How about my chicken feed? My salary?"

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EVERY NOW AND THEN HE RESTED ON HIS OARS AND GAZED AT HER.